# THE EVOLUTION

OF

# AMERICAN POLITICAL PARTIES

## A SKETCH OF PARTY DEVELOPMENT

BY

### EDGAR E. ROBINSON

PROFESSOR OF AMERICAN HISTORY IN STANFORD UNIVERSITY
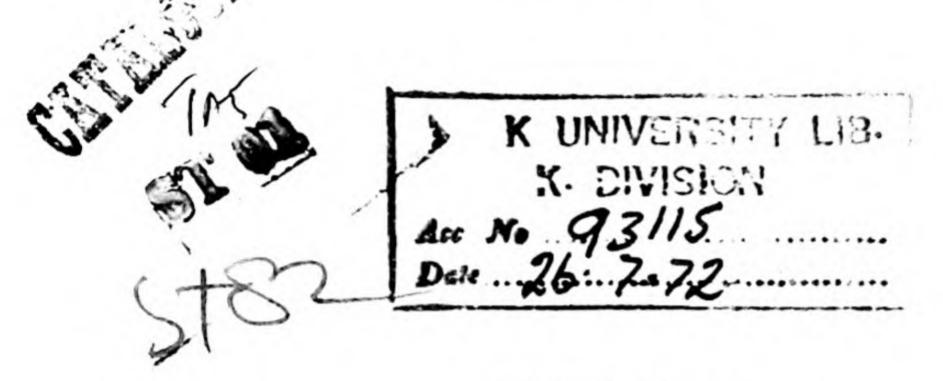
NEW YORK
HARCOURT, BRACE AND COMPANY

# REPRINTS IN GOVERNMENT
# AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

*Editor-in-Chief:* Richard H. Leach

DUKE UNIVERSITY

First reprinting 1970, Johnson Reprint Corporation

Printed in the United States of America

# TO
## FREDERICK JACKSON TURNER

"Observations on my reading history, in Library, May 19th, 1731.

That the great affairs of the world, the wars, revolutions, etc., are carried on and affected by parties.

That the view of these parties is their present general interest, or what they take to be such.

That the different views of these different parties occasion all confusion.

That while a party is carrying on a general design, each man has his particular private interest in view.

That as soon as a party has gained its general point, each member becomes intent upon his particular interest; which, thwarting others, breaks that party into divisions, and occasions more confusion.

That few in public affairs act from a mere view of the good of their country, whatever they may pretend; and tho' their actings bring real good to their country, yet men primarily considered that their own and their country's interest was united, and did not act from a principle of benevolence.

That fewer still, in public affairs, act with a view to the good of mankind."

*The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin.*

# PREFACE

ONE may write of party with the comfortable assurance that all who will read what he writes have at some time discussed the subject. No topic is quite so generously considered either in conversation or in print. In the United States every interested citizen speaks with authority upon matters of party, particularly in the way of accusation and in the realm of prophecy. There are, of course, serious drawbacks in such a state of affairs. These drawbacks are increased because students of political history have not agreed in their conception of party and of its place in the American system. Although we have special studies, both of particular parties and of limited periods, examinations of party machinery and political methods, explanations of causes and bases, as well as a number of treatises on the nature and significance of party, little attention has been given to describing the activities of the succession of comparatively small groups of men, who, under cover of various names, have continuously exercised or sought to exercise the governing powers in the nation.[1]

I have sought to present briefly and in order of their appearance the succession of political parties which have been the agencies for the expression of public opinion in the United States. Particular attention has been given to the character of party formation, and an attempt made to shed light on party origins which seem to be peculiar to this country. I have tried to simplify by adhering for the most part to one conception of party. It is conceived of as most accurately seen, not as a segment of voters, no matter how often arrayed

---

[1] General bibliographical note, *infra*, pp 366-367 also selected bibliographical list at the end of each chapter.

under the party banner; not as a group of public officials, no matter how insistent in program or how long in the public eye; but as a party organization quite apart from the government and continuing to exist in the degree of support given it by the voters. Such organizations we know to exist and to dominate American politics, and we know it has long been so. I believe that by such an approach the reality of the present American political grouping may be more completely revealed.

Parts of the Introduction and of Chapters XIV–XVIII have appeared during the last ten years in various journals, including *The New Republic, The Sewanee Review, The Pacific Review*, and *The American Journal of Sociology*. All have been rewritten, but due acknowledgment is hereby given. I am indebted to many persons; to students in my seminars at the University of Minnesota and at Yale University, as well as at Stanford University; to publicists and party managers who have afforded me opportunities for investigation; to Walter Lippmann, whose friendly interest led to the preparation of this sketch in its present form; most of all, to Frederick Jackson Turner, whose suggestion, aid, and guidance have been for many years the source of the greatest inspiration.

Two of my former graduate students, Miss Margaret E. Bennett and Mrs. Flora May Fearing have rendered valuable assistance in the preparation of bibliographical notes. I am under particular obligation to Miss Lisette E. Fast for secretarial assistance in preparing manuscript and reading proof.

EDGAR E. ROBINSON

Stanford University,
April 5, 1924

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

# THE EVOLUTION OF AMERICAN
# POLITICAL PARTIES

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security."

*The Declaration of Independence* (1776).

# INTRODUCTION [1]

NINE out of ten citizens have at some time considered them-
selves and have been called by their neighbors, Democrats
or Republicans. This has led naturally, although erroneously,
to the assertion that they are members of the Democratic or
Republican party. Except in the case of a comparatively
few men, and, of course, fewer women, there has been no real
membership in party, in the sense of recognized membership
in club or church. A citizen has voted, let us say, for every
Democratic candidate for President since 1884, except Parker
in 1904 and Wilson in 1912, and usually he has been "regular"
on state and local matters. But he has not been in public
office, he has not sat in caucus or in convention, he has not
paid dues in a political club, and he has not contributed in
money or effort to a political campaign. Once a year or once

[1] Important surveys include H. J. Ford, *The Rise and Growth of American Politics*; J. A. Woodburn, *Political Parties and Party Problems*.

The nature of party and its significance was the general theme of A. D. Morse in his various papers recently collected and published under the title, *Parties and Party Leaders*. *See also*, A. C. McLaughlin, *The Courts, the Constitution, and Parties*.

Party machinery and methods are shown effectively in C. E. Merriam, *The American Party System*; P. O. Ray, *Political Parties and Practical Politics*; R. C. Brooks, *Political Parties and Electoral Problems*.

Accounts of particular parties include such important contributions as A. C. Cole, *The Whig Party in the South*; S. J. Buck, *The Granger Movement*; Charles McCarthy, *The Anti-Masonic Party*; E. D. Ross, *The Liberal Republican Movement*; W. A. Robinson, *Jeffersonian Democracy in New England*.

Limited periods are covered, for example, by Jesse Macy, *Political Parties in the United States, 1846–1861*; and T. C. Smith, *Parties and Slavery, 1850–59*.

Presentation of underlying causes is found in C. A. Beard, *Economic Origins of Jeffersonian Democracy*; H. C. Hockett, *Western Influences on Political Parties to 1825*.

For special studies for each period, see notes at the end of each chapter. General bibliographical note will be found at the end of the last chapter.

in four years he takes his place with a group of men with whom he has acted before. He has an accustomed place in the party parade of strength, but in no proper sense is he a member of even the loosest organization. The call to the colors brings him out on election day, and less frequently on primary day; that is the extent of his party contribution, and indeed of his participation in government itself.

But in spite of this, it is the common practice to refer to such average citizens, not only as members of a political party, but also as constituting the party itself.[2] In discussing election returns it is said that the Democratic party was strong in 1896, meaning thereby, among other things, that the six million voters who supported Bryan constituted the party. As a matter of fact, fifteen or twenty thousand men were members of party committees in that campaign, another ten thousand men took active part in the campaign, and it is estimated that one hundred thousand contributed money and voluntary effort. At a maximum, a million, one in six, were members of a party organization of any kind. Moreover, this was an unusual campaign in the number of the rank and file who took an active part. It was a crusading year. But the party record of the ensuing four years was made by less than two hundred and fifty Democratic members of Congress and a dozen Democratic Governors.

In a real sense the members of a party committee, and the partisans in public office, constitute a group that does justify the exact application of the term "party." They are bound closely together, at least temporarily, by a common purpose; they have come to office or seek office on a common plat-

---

[2] Varying use of the term "party" leads often to an absurdity. For example, "The radicals in the *party* intend to force the *party* to absorb new ideas, and unless the *party* shows progress in the coming session of Congress the *party* is doomed to certain death." Successively "party" is made to mean, "body of voters," "the party organization," "party members in office," and finally, "the historic tradition."

form, and they are for the time being the repositories of the traditions and obligations of those who have preceded them. They are a going concern. They pay dues, elect officers, raise funds, carry on campaigns, and have been recognized in the laws of many of the states as organizations carrying on an accepted business.

The preliminaries of the campaign of 1920 furnished a good example of the wide difference between party as an army gathered for primary day and party as a small organization engaged in the pursuit and enjoyment of power in public affairs. In the primaries little attempt was made to get the will of the voters upon issues. Except to a limited degree, and then only by revealing how small a proportion of election day voters had primary preferences, did these votes express a party will. They were at best evidences of the currents of public opinion, just as were the results of the poll conducted during the spring by one of the national weeklies.

Less than one hundred men constructed the platforms, and not many more were seriously consulted in the preliminary conferences upon disputed points. A dozen men, more or less, in each of the conventions gave the final decisions upon the most hotly disputed planks. A group in each convention finally came to agreement upon the candidates. These candidates were then nominated by the thousand delegates, who in theory represented the party voters of the various divisions of the Union, but who in reality represented themselves, their organizations in the localities from which they came, and altogether perhaps five hundred thousand persons who, because of leisure, money, or interest, had selected one or the other of the two dominant parties as the agency through which to accomplish their desires in government.

It follows that in reality a comparatively few men and women embodied the Democratic or the Republican tradition in the ensuing campaign. It was no fewer—perhaps there

were more—than in any recent campaign, except in the case of the Progressives in 1912. Their work was party work, their tactics became the party tactics, their beliefs appeared as the party beliefs, as the campaign forced them out, and it was the rule of the Republican group that was brought to Washington in March of 1921. Such has been the situation even in campaigns characterized by the outstanding leadership of the nominees.

Yet the great majority, approximately eight-tenths of the dominant party vote, has habitually voted the party ticket, and can be counted on to do so. In election after election in the past twenty-eight years the American electorate has divided into two great armies on voting day. The South, as every one knows, has been overwhelmingly Democratic, even as the New England and North Atlantic area, except for one election, has been overwhelmingly Republican, but it is as true, although not as apparent at first glance, that the entire nation has been "regular" in its voting in Presidential elections. In spite of the steady increase in the voting population, indeed keeping in close touch with that increase, each of the two parties has during this period polled at each election nearly forty per cent. of the vote cast,[3] and what is of greater significance, the distribution of the vote by counties makes it evident that a great part of it must have been an unchanging vote.[4] At a maximum, twenty per cent. of the popular vote showed itself subject to change or interested in the lesser parties, and in some states the change has been less than five per cent. in the course of a half dozen campaigns. In view of this, there is some ground for treating the parties as armies of

[3] The seeming exception in 1912 disappears when the Republican and Progressive vote is united for purpose of comparison with the Democratic vote, *infra*, p. 324.

[4] I have developed this matter in detail in a study of "The Distribution of the Presidential Vote of 1912" published in *The American Journal of Sociology*, XX, 18. The seeming exception in 1916 seems to prove the rule, *infra*, p. 339.

voters always in battle array, with little need of organization to hold them in line, with a comparatively few guerrillas operating between the lines, and with an outstanding leader or an inspiring battle-cry only now and then to make the armies eager for the familiar fray.

What we seem to have in the United States is a division of the electorate into two great groups, neither of which is a political party in the sense of a band of men bound together by a common doctrine or a specific program, as in the case of the Socialists or the Populists or any of the important third parties that have appeared in the past fifty years, but only in the sense that each constitutes a great body of voters that have been in the habit of acting together on election day for the purpose of accomplishing certain tangible and immediate results. But within each of these great groups there are divisions of opinion which have produced smaller groupings that appear to be political parties, in fact, if not in name. During a long period of political exile the Democratic party was divided into many groupings, some consisting of personal followings, some being of sectional origin, but most important of all the division of the party into two great groups, based upon conflicting views of the proper political treatment of the economic problems of the period. Bryan and his fellow radicals captured control of the party organization in 1896, but except for this first campaign the conservative leaders of the East retained a membership in the party, and upon their return to power signalized their violent opposition to the Bryan program. And Bryan supported Parker in 1904.

The Republican party, apparently so completely a unit in the five years that followed the bolt of a portion of the silver wing of the party in 1896, became in the ensuing eleven years steadily more complex in its membership. At the height of his power Theodore Roosevelt keenly realized that his party, or parts of it, responded at times to the leadership of

men of such opposing views as Foraker and La Follette. By force of unusual capacity for opportunist leadership, Roosevelt managed to retain the support of Eastern conservatives without losing that of Western radicals in 1904. But with successive victories the divisions within the party membership became more and more evident. Nowhere was this revealed more clearly than in the membership of the party in the Senate.

For the eighteen years, 1906–1924, divisions within both parties in the Senate were marked. Indeed even as early as the second administration of Cleveland two distinct groups of Democrats had appeared, and after 1905 there were always four marked divisions in the Senate. Of these the Progressive Republican grouping grew from one to sixteen. During the first six years of the Wilson administration the Democratic membership was fairly united, but after 1919 it tended to divide as before 1913. As for the Republicans, an examination of the votes of the Sixty-fourth Congress revealed four groups on the matter of the League of Nations, and on domestic affairs two distinct groupings, the membership being divided, for example, on the matter of greater railway control and of the treatment of valuable oil and mineral lands.

The dominant Republican party is not a party but a coalition of parties.[5] The factions that disagree among themselves upon every important public question, domestic and foreign; that range in choice of leadership from Lodge to La Follette; that during six years of Democratic initiative, 1913–1919, were unable at critical moments to respond to a definitive leadership, entered into an alliance for a single purpose—to win the election of 1920. And the struggle for power within

[5] It is true that these factions are in an early stage of party development, beyond which they may never go. This is the stage described as "a body of men, somewhat fluctuating in personnel and in numbers, who have begun to work together to attain some political purpose or to oppose other men to whom for some reason they have felt antagonistic." A. C. McLaughlin, *The Courts, the Constitution and Parties*, 133.

the coalition commenced the day that the election resulted in favor of their nominee.

In spite of a realization of these facts, if such a realization could be widespread, there would still remain a continued dominant interest in the two party system. It is embedded in political thinking, or at least always aroused by political emotion.

It is generally believed that two great parties are peculiarly adapted to American conditions and that third party movements are ineffectual, undesirable, and in the United States doomed to failure. It is assumed, moreover, that the present great parties have preëmpted the field and are not to be disturbed in their supremacy. Naturally it follows that these parties are the great organs of government in America and that it is a mark of interested citizenship to affiliate with one or the other. This view may go so far at times as to consider any other avenue of political agitation positively dangerous. Such an extensive claim may rest in the conviction that there are in America two, and only two, sets of fundamental conviction and belief, and that in spite of glaring internal division of opinion the Democratic and Republican parties in some way embody these fundamental differences.[6]

If it should be shown, however, that the peculiar conditions out of which the American party system developed have altered to such a degree as to make the original impelling purposes of the two great parties inapplicable to the present needs, and that the fundamental conceptions of party held by the organizations in control of the present parties are not in any vital degree adaptable to the present condition of affairs in the United States, it would seem to follow that a

---

[6] The often-quoted definition of Edmund Burke would seem applicable to such a view; "a body of men, united for promoting by their joint endeavor the national interest upon some particular interest on which they are all agreed." *Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontent* (1770).

"Democracy, however, was, and still is, so deeply rooted in the physical and economic circumstances of the United States, that the constitutional barriers set up against it have proved feeble and vain. . . . In a new country, however, with unlimited land, the substantial equality of the people in property, culture, and social position is inevitable. Political equality follows naturally. Democracy is given in the circumstances of the case."

W. G. SUMNER, "Politics in America, 1776–1876,"
*in North American Review* (1876) CXXII, 52.

# CHAPTER I

## FOUNDATIONS OF PARTY IN AMERICA

*Origins of American political practice—The beginnings of a new nation in America—Sections and classes within the British mainland colonies—Self-government in America—Suffrage and representation—Differences within the colonies—Party life—Extent of democratic practice—Advance of the American frontier—Basis of a fundamental alignment.*

THE origins of political democracy in the United States have a peculiar interest for the student of politics. Some of the reasons are obvious. In our own day the United States has become one of the great nations of the earth. It has brought to this high position a political character molded for the most part by a phenomenal growth and expansion during the nineteenth century, and a political reputation based in large measure upon declarations of Americans in the course of their struggle for independence in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. What has been termed "American democracy" has been vigorously commended for more than one hundred and fifty years, by others as well as by ourselves, never more so than during the period of the World War.

However, the past twenty years have witnessed an increase in the number of those, both at home and abroad, who do not find in American democracy, whether in the theory embodied in American reputation, or in the fact of American political character, a solution for the problems of the modern world, either in the United States or elsewhere. Renewed interest in the origins of democracy in the United States has naturally followed upon a vigorous denial of its potency. These origins antedate the struggle for independence. For the bases of American political interest, the beginnings of

American political practice, and the initial tendencies in American politics are found in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries among the Americans who composed the North American mainland colonies of the British Empire.

For Americans they were long before 1776. The span of British colonial development in America had covered more than a century and a half. It is, however, a common mistake to think of the colonists on the eve of their revolution and the colonists who first came to the North Atlantic coast as of the same generation, or at least of the same general period. Of course, the truth is quite otherwise. Four generations intervene between the mature activities of John Winthrop and those of Benjamin Franklin, and as great a time elapsed between the foundation of Jamestown and the birth of George Washington as between the adoption of the Federal constitution and the outbreak of the World War. By 1760 two-thirds of the population within the area that was to become the United States had been born in America.

When in that year George III became King of Great Britain there were living on the mainland of North America at least 1,500,000 British subjects. The bulk of these were within fifty miles of the sea-coast, and of these the greater portion were within 100 miles of either Boston, New York, Philadelphia or Baltimore. Nowhere had permanent settlement reached a point more than 250 miles from the sea-coast. From northeast to southwest the British settlements extended about 1200 miles. The British population in America, equaling though it did one-sixth of the population of the British Isles, was but a fringe upon the American continent.[1]

But the decided increase in the number of immigrants in each succeeding decade, and the rapid adaptation to un-

[1] "No enumeration embracing all the colonies was ever made, and in some of the colonies no accurate count of population occurred during the entire colonial period." *A Century of Population Growth* (Bureau of the Census), 3.

familiar conditions on the frontier, now pushing into the ranges of the Alleghanies, gave promise of the occupation of a much larger area before the close of the century. One hundred years before there had been scattered along the coastal plain less than 100,000 persons; indeed one hundred and fifty years before there had been less than 300, and these had constituted in reality not a colony, but a trading post of an English commercial company. In a century and a half colonial development in America had ceased to be a matter involving a half-dozen isolated settlements along the Atlantic sea-coast, and had become the problem of the expansion of an outlying section of the British Empire. One million and a half people had come to have a life of their own.

Moreover in the last thirty years, during which the population had nearly doubled, there had appeared two new features of transcendant importance. Non-English elements had existed within the colonies from the beginning, but the second quarter of the eighteenth century was marked out from the preceding years by a great influx of Scotch-Irish and Germans. Beginning in 1717 a steady stream of these immigrants flowed into the British colonies, particularly through the port of Philadelphia. No figures can be given for 1760, but by 1775 it is estimated that of Scotch-Irish there were 375,000 or one sixth of the population, and of Germans 225,000, or one tenth of the population of the colonies. These, together with the smaller numbers of French, Swiss, Irish, Welsh, Scotch and Dutch constituted a considerable foreign element in the British colonies on the eve of the Revolution. A large proportion of this new population occupied lands to the west of the more settled communities that had been the product of the immigration of the seventeenth century. As is evident, of course, there had been from the earliest settlement on the coastal plain a necessity for pushing westward into the wilderness, but in the first half of the eighteenth century an area

greater than all that previously occupied was possessed by the advancing pioneers. The new area lay for the most part above the fall line on the rivers flowing into the Atlantic and yet east of the ranges of the Alleghanies. These years witnessed the foundation of a new section in America. Were one to imagine that about the opening of the eighteenth century the Atlantic coast plain gave way and the waters of the Atlantic thereafter advanced to the fall line, one could picture then the beginning of a new colonization of a new coast area. In some such way one could differentiate an important part of the colonization of the first half of the eighteenth century from that during which the well-known coast colonies were founded.[2]

From the time of the foundation of the first of these permanent coast colonies in 1607, the British colonist had been the frontiersman of the Empire pushing its way westward. From the first the settlers had been profoundly affected by this experience on the Indian frontier of an unexplored continent. Yet by 1760 there were many descendants of early immigrants and many newcomers, resident in the more settled areas on the sea-coast, who were unfamiliar with the actual frontier in America. Indeed as one passed from east to west, one passed from communities similar in many important respects to settled European communities through a succession of communities, each more primitive than its predecessor, until one reached the cabin of the pioneer farmer on the most advanced frontier. Economically the great majority of the colonists had begun on even terms, but a process of reformation of society had gone on as settlement pushed into the interior, and in more than half of the colonies this process of readjustment had been going on for more than a century.

In that time there had developed within each colony a

[2] *See* map of distribution of population in 1760 in Edward Channing, *History of the United States*, II (end of the volume).

fairly distinct alignment of social classes; in part a heritage of alignments existent in England, but in increasing measure the resultant of new conditions in America. There was a small group of men of business or profession, including the owners of large land holdings and the officials placed in America by the authority of the British government. There was a second group made up of independent farmers, traders and shopkeepers. There were also, the mechanics and itinerant laborers, not as yet, except in rare instances, actively class conscious. Throughout the colonies, but chiefly in the colonies south of Pennsylvania, lived the negro slaves. Indentured servants formed a considerable, although decreasing, class in every colony. Finally there were the pioneer farmers, hunters and traders scattered along the long frontier from interior New England to the uplands of the Carolinas. But, after all, agriculture in some form had at some time been the basic interest of all the classes. Throughout the colonial period, and long after, the political and social alignments were conditioned in a considerable measure by the fact that the bulk of a colonizing people were of necessity agrarian in outlook.

In contemplating the British mainland colonies in 1760 one is struck most of all by the variety of life possible within a group of thirteen separate communities, extending along the sea-coast more than a thousand miles, and each having an Indian frontier on the edge of an unsettled and for the most part an unexplored interior. In a century and a half American communities had come to have a life quite apart from that of Europe, but of even greater significance there had developed in that time varying degrees of "Americanism."

The men who commenced the construction of a polity in America had brought with them the practices of seventeenth century England. They had been familiar with a large degree of independence in local government. This practice formed

the basis for their immediate interest in the building and the carrying on of governments in the communities which they founded in America. The towns, in those colonies in which they appeared, were in the beginning, as were local governments in England, virtually self-governing in local affairs. But although such self-government was clearly the tendency of the English, it often in America was a self-government forced and maintained by necessity. Such examples are found in the Mayflower compact of 1620 and in the Watauga Association of 1772, where it seemed to involve a participation by all men in the community.

But as the early settlements broadened into colonies, a comparatively few men had an active part in this self-government of the colony. This, too, was a heritage of English practice. In Massachusetts the original group of voters in the company, whose trading charter was used as a basis for government in the colony, was, it is true, increased by the admission of additional freemen, but in 1658 a property qualification was imposed. Indeed, from the first, property qualifications were general throughout the colonies, and in the eighteenth century they were universal. In New York it has been estimated that fully one half of the male population above the age of twenty-one was without any political privilege whatever, and at the close of the century in that colony only two thousand voters were recorded as voting. In Virginia, the colony in which met in 1619 the first representative assembly to be held in America, there participated in the middle of the eighteenth century only nine per cent. of the white male population. In the colonial governments of New England the proportion was even smaller.

Nor was the property qualification the only restriction. "In the elections for the colonial legislature there were restrictions imposed upon voters in respect to sex, age, race and nationality, religion, good character, residence, property,

freemanship in corporations, and certain qualifications akin to the borough franchise in England." [3] As important as restrictions imposed by law was the lack of a tradition of participation. Colonial elections "called forth relatively and absolutely only a small fraction of the present percentage of voters."

In these colonial governments the assembly achieved early supremacy, traces of it being evident as early as 1660. In the long struggle between the governors in the colonies, who represented the home government, and the legislative assemblies, which in each colony spoke for the inhabitants, the leaders in the assemblies conceived of themselves as representative of the people of the several colonies. This led easily, although erroneously, to the assertion that the people were actively represented in the assemblies. And there has been some easy assertion to the effect that in these assemblies there developed a considerable belief in the right of the common man to participate. The fact appears to have been quite otherwise.

Such a situation did not appear to the enfranchised colonist in exactly the light it does to later generations. As he looked about him he saw in local government a general participation. As for the colonial assembly, its members appeared to represent the people of the colony, in a far greater degree than members of the Parliament represented the people of the Empire. It is to be remembered that in 1763 a majority of all the members of the House of Commons was elected by less than 15,000 persons. American practice might well seem to the enfranchised colonist as democratic by contrast. As far as he was concerned in colonial matters, it was so, for he was directly represented in his assembly.

But it was not strange, since the assemblies more directly represented the people of the colonies than did the Parliament

[3] A. E. McKinley, *The Suffrage Franchise in the English Colonies*, 473.

the people of the Empire, that the elements of the colonial population which lacked the franchise and the sections which had inadequate representation should in time call for a more democratic practice. The steady advance of the frontier and the consequent continual creation of new districts, raised repeatedly the question of the proper basis for representation.

The new settlements on the advancing frontier were the centers of dissent. Actual living conditions in the new society made for a democratic spirit, which, in cases where it had once prevailed on the sea-coast, had long since been submerged. In these recently settled areas foreigners were increasing, as were the less well-to-do from the coastal areas, pushing westward in hope of bettering their conditions and among whom extreme views in religion and in politics were not uncommon. There developed because of the economic and social equality on the frontier a sense of the possibility of political equality in matters affecting the colony as a whole.

The enfranchised classes of the coast area were not unaware of the differences between their point of view and that of the newer sections. In several colonies a struggle developed in the colonial assembly between the representatives of the two sections. In these struggles the eastern representatives had the political advantage of greater representation and experience in government, but they were lamed in two respects; first by the fact that in struggles with royal governors the assemblies had come to use more and more arguments for self-government, which could easily be applied by the western representatives to their own demands; and second by the continued growth in the population of the western areas. This was indeed the key to the struggle even after the success of the war for independence. In the words of Farrand: "The frontiersmen had many things to complain of, but their culminating grievance was that they did not have the share in government

to which they claimed their numbers entitled them, for then they would have been in a position to remedy the situation for themselves." [4]

By 1760 American governmental practice was clearly defined. There was a general participation in local government, partly a heritage of English practice, partly from necessity on the American frontier, but colonial assemblies were controlled by a decided minority of the population of the colonies. These spoke for the mass of the people, and used the language of popular rights, but were in reality a small group representing in a direct way special groups rather than the colonists as a whole. Holding large tracts of land, many of them possessing negro slaves, engaged in commerce as well as agriculture, socially and economically well established, these minorities had become by 1760 potential rivals of the ruling classes in Great Britain in all matters affecting America. Within these minorities there were men of more democratic purpose, but for the most part the democratic elements in the population were without direct representation. Both leader and group had to wait upon an enlarged electorate.

Parties seem inseparable from democracy; they have come to be, in our own political life as elsewhere, the mainsprings of political activity. What evidence have we of the existence of political parties? From the earliest days in colonial development there were divisions of opinion among the leaders within each of the colonies and this division was usually expressed in the assemblies. There were cliques and factions among the enfranchised. There were groups in control of the governments or in pursuit of the patronage of office. There were also discernible in all of the colonies two types of public opinion, one usually supporting the governor and his acts, and the other always calling for greater power for the assembly and its representatives. As we approach the middle of the eight-

[4] Max Farrand, *Development of the United States*, 21.

eenth century the groupings are more clearly marked and the issues more easily discernible.[5]

But prior to 1760 there is little evidence of any definite and permanent alignment of the voters. In the first place no intercolonial field of action or of debate existed. Whatever the cause for a definite alignment, it must be confined to a single colony, and the restricted electorate forbade the development of any such popular parties as we have associated with subsequent American practice.[6]

There was an additional reason why, within each of the colonies, party life was slow in development; much slower, for example, than in England. This was the presence of the governor, responsible to a power outside of the colony. The most frequent political division had come to be upon issues between the governor and the assembly. The governor could not create a party, except as that party was a personal faction supporting his administration. The assembly was not subject to decisive division because in no way, except in Rhode Island and Connecticut, could a group in the assembly obtain control of the executive office. Until there arose a possibility of making both parts of the government responsive to a single will or group of wills, political parties were not likely to exist.

When, therefore, reference is made to a "court" party, it is seen to mean a clique or faction in control or desiring to control the government of the colony in sympathy with the King's representative. When men are termed "Whigs" and "Tories," as happened toward the middle of the century, it is because of an avowed or suspected sympathy with those parties in England, but not an indication that party lines of a similar meaning and of a like nature were tightly drawn in

[5] A. E. Morse, *The Federalist Party in Massachusetts*, 11; Carl Becker, *Political Parties in the Province of New York*, 8; F. W. Dallinger, *Nominations for Elective Office in the United States*, 5.

[6] Comparisons in votes with a later period of little value; see G. D. Luetscher, *Early Political Machinery in the United States*, 23.

colonial affairs. And there is slight evidence of party organization of the most meagre kind. When the term "democrat" was used, as it seldom was, it could not, because of the limitations upon suffrage and the lack of interest among the mass of the people, mean much more than a promise of membership in a popular party of a later day, or at best a belief in political equality.

Despite all the talk of self-government in the British colonies, such as expressed in the words, "In this new land men governed themselves," in reality a minority were active in public life. Self-government meant a degree of freedom from British control. It did not refer to the opportunity of the citizen. There was no such thing as democratic government, in the sense that Bryce defines it, as that of a state in which the ruling power is legally vested in the members of the community as a whole. The term "democracy," when used, referred to the rule of the aggregate who shared in the government.[7] Nor was there prior to 1760 a democratic goal consciously set up by any considerable number of colonists. A literature of democratic protest has not been found. Actual democracy was experienced for a time on every frontier, only to be gradually submerged in the older practices as the frontier passed westward. It is in the increasing distances from sources of authority, and in the actual independence felt by a rapidly increasing population on an expanding frontier that we find foundations for government by the mass of men, and the possibility of the rise of popular parties of more than local significance in each of the colonies.[8]

For the primary demand of the newer areas, striking as it

[7] "The word Democracy has been used ever since the time of Herodotus to denote that form of government in which the ruling power of a state is legally vested, not in any particular class or classes, but in the members of the community as a whole." James Bryce, *Modern Democracies*, I, 20.

[8] *Cf.* F. J. Turner, *The Frontier in American History*, 67–125. Also, Max Farrand, "The West and the American Revolution," in the *Yale Review*, XVII, 44.

did at the restricted franchise and at the inequitable represen-
tation, should it achieve even a partial realization, promised
an alignment of voters in the two sections for the control of
the assemblies of the several colonies. This was not merely a
disagreement of leaders, arising out of ambition or thirst for
power; nor was it simply the evidence of the always existent
contest between the capitalist and the democratic pioneer.
It foreshadowed the emergence of a real difference of political
opinion among the people, and it had its origin in conditions
peculiar to the advancement of the American frontier.

### BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

The general student of political institutions will wish to consult
the first two volumes of Edward Channing's, *History of the United
States* (1905–1909); also J. A. Doyle, *English Colonies in America*,
I–V (1882–1907); and particularly H. L. Osgood's, *American Col-
onies in the 17th Century* (1904). In E. P. Cheyney, *European
Background of American History* (1906), and C. M. Andrews,
*Colonial Self Government* (1906), he will find material of interest.

Brief political histories, parts of which are valuable for this
period, include Carl Becker, *Beginnings of the American People*
(1915), Max Farrand, *The Development of the United States* (1918).
A longer account of the highest value, designed for the general
reader as well as the student is E. B. Greene, *The Foundations of
American Nationality* (1922).

Special studies upon phases or factors in politics include C. F.
Bishop, *History of Elections in the American Colonies* (1893), E. B.
Greene, *The Provincial Governor* (1898), A. E. McKinley, *The Suf-
frage Franchise in the thirteen English Colonies* (1905), and Carl
Becker, *History of Political Parties in the Province of New York*
(1909).

The special study throwing greatest light upon the forces under-
lying political developments is F. J. Turner's "The Old West,"
published first in 1908 in the *Proceedings of the Wisconsin Historical
Society*, and subsequently republished as the third chapter in
*The Frontier in American History* (1920).

"We may trace the contest between the capitalist and the democratic pioneer from the earliest colonial days."

F. J. TURNER, *The Frontier in American History*, 325.

# CHAPTER II

## THE PARTY OF THE REVOLUTION

*Divisions in public opinion prior to the Revolution—Early political organizations—Formation of permanent state governments—Parties within the states—Committees of correspondence—The Continental Congress—Divisions of opinion on the Revolution—The rule of the party of Revolution—Platform of the party—Fundamental changes in American practice.*

THROUGHOUT the period of colonization the watershed of the Appalachians had marked the limit of the uncontested claim of Great Britain in North America. Beyond that, to the westward, although claim had been made, and charters had been granted for trade and settlement, the trader and the settler, as well as the military power of Great Britain, had faced the necessity of meeting the active opposition of France and of French representatives in the new world. But almost at the moment of the accession of George III to the throne, the trans-montane area became the undisputed property of Great Britain by the provisions of the treaty that concluded the Seven Years' War. From the Arctic to the Gulf of Mexico, and westward to the Mississippi, the British colonist beheld British domain, and as most of the desirable lands east of the mountains had been occupied prior to 1760, the British authorities faced the immediate necessity of providing for its government. British ministers came to realize this need as thoroughly as did the advancing colonist. Against such a background occurred the rapid changes of the next thirty years.

Within fifteen years, that is by 1775, the population of the British colonies in North America exceeded two and one half million. The frontier of settlement had entered the

mountain valleys, had crossed the divide, and there were occupied areas in the lower Ohio valley. Fifteen years more, and the territory of the United States embraced a population of nearly 4,000,000 persons, of whom 125,000 were living west of the Appalachians. But of course the bulk of the population lived in the area between the mountains and the Atlantic; altogether less than 250,000 square miles was settled or less than 30 per cent. of the total area of the United States as it then existed. And despite the rapid increase and the entrance of many different types of immigrants, the population remained preponderantly English.

When the British ministry undertook to tighten the bonds of Empire, as it did in the years immediately following the close of the war with France, it placed the burden of accomplishment of its new policy upon British officials resident in the various colonies. These officials in the performance of their new duties found themselves in conflict with the representatives of colonial opinion in the various assemblies, as was to be expected, and with a large part of colonial business men whose interests were jeopardized by the proposed enforcement of the laws of trade. Neither in the question of taxation within the colonies, nor in larger questions of payment of custom duties, at ports of entry, was there political machinery to adjust the differences between the representatives of King and Parliament on one side and the representatives of colonial interests on the other.

Consequently the political battle was fought at long range; and both in the British parliament and in the colonial assemblies there developed alignments upon the fundamental issues, as well as upon the proposals of the successive ministries. In the Assemblies, as was to be expected, as a result of the former struggles against the power of the governors, the leading opponents of the executive power formed the nuclei of the groups who now contemplated more active resistance than

had heretofore been effective. As was natural, the so-called "court parties" constituted the defenders of the new British policy. In Massachusetts, as early as 1763, they could with greater reason than before be termed Tories; certainly by 1769 there was real reason for terming their opponents Whigs. It would be a mistake, however, to conceive of the Tories at this time as comprising the aristocratic classes in the colonies. The Whigs, as well, drew strongly from these classes, notably in South Carolina; the issue was essentially one of home rule, and a considerable element among the upper classes in the various colonies had a vital interest in its continuance.

But even this more clearly defined division in the assemblies and within the restricted electorate might have meant little vital change from the earlier factional alignments, were it not that the factor of party organization was introduced at this point.

We know that active resistance to the Stamp Act grew out of the associations of Sons of Liberty. It was a natural step to make this resistance register in the assemblies as soon as it was evident that the issue would be drawn there. Patriotic societies appeared in all of the colonies. These organizations kept alive agitation; in many instances they nominated the Whig candidates. It is in such nominations that we may cease to consider such organizations merely as transitory vehicles for expression of public opinion and to look upon them also as party organizations. We have long known something of the Boston caucus, and its significance in the development of party control in America is thus summarized: "In Massachusetts after 1766, and to a certain extent before, the political destinies of the House of Representatives were watched over by a powerful little group of members, the leaders of which were the Boston delegation and their friends . . ." Henceforth until the Revolution the business of the House was transacted by this Boston "Junto." [1]

[1] R. V. Harlow, *History of Legislative Method in the Period before 1825*, p. 25.

It is natural that we should find these new manifestations in the preliminaries of the revolution, for the issue was narrowed to a point of acute controversy, and, more than all else, there lay, in the event of an actual break, an opportunity to obtain control of the colonial government as a whole. As the quarrel grew fiercer, the party purposes became more marked. Not only in legislatures, but in town meetings, and in extra-legal committees, the currents of public opinion were more and more evident. Lord George Germaine saw the reality of party strength when he said in 1774, "Put an end to their town meetings. I would not have men of a mercantile cast every day collecting themselves together and debating about political matters." But after all, it was in the legislatures and in the rivalries of groups within the legislature that we find the clearest manifestations of party life in the various colonies. By 1770 groups of men intent upon common objectives were in control in Massachusetts, Virginia, New York and North Carolina.

The withdrawal of the representatives of royal power left the assemblies at least temporarily in control of the governments. These bodies in their contests with the governors had developed a unity of main objective, however their members might differ among themselves upon measures before them in session. The real meaning of this objective was well illustrated in Massachusetts when in 1768 the assembly came together without the call of the governor. Such action was easily and naturally taken in each colony as the circumstance brought forth the necessity. Such a provincial convention governed Massachusetts from 1774 to 1780. These provincial assemblies provided substitutes for the colonial governors. These substitutes were the committees of safety, designated by the assemblies, composed of members of the assemblies, and answerable to the assemblies. Naturally the aggressive members governed in these bodies, as in the assemblies, but the

effectiveness of the method rested finally upon the support that public opinion gave in local organizations, many of them extra-legal, to this extra-legal colonial executive. It was a temporary measure only, to fill the time until provincial constitutions should be more formally provided.

In the creation of these new constitutions for colonies, long virtually independent, but now each a state in assertion, how large a proportion of the population had a part, and what elements, if any, were absent? In the first place the element of the population that adhered to the crown took no part. This comprised a large section of the electorate that had been politically active; they had had the suffrage and many of them had been in public life. Thus was eliminated a group which had since 1761 been fighting to control public opinion, in the interests of conciliation. This removed from participation at least 100,000 persons, and indeed if John Adams was right, many more than this, for he believed that at least one third of the population was actively opposed to independence. Most of them refrained from participation in conventions for new constitutions. In the second place we do not find that in these elections any great number of those previously disfranchised had a part, despite the fact that Congress had advised a greater extension of the franchise. If we were to judge from the provisions of the constitutions drawn by these conventions, we would conclude that in spite of the appearance of certain numbers of individuals previously without the vote, it was not the intention to extend the franchise. Consequently we conclude that the elements that built the new constitutions were those previously politically active, and of these the element of greatest importance was that which had led in strengthening the assemblies in struggles with the royal governors.

How far from democratic these conventions were in their purpose may be judged from their constitutional provisions

as to suffrage. These were substantially the same as those that had existed under the colonial governments. "In every one of the thirteen states a property qualification still held, and in five of them the property had to be in the form of real estate." [2] We may conclude that as far as these new state governments were concerned, "just powers," came not from the people, but at the consent of the tax-payers.

Yet it is in the formation of these constitutions, notably in the case of the Massachusetts constitution of 1780, that, it is frequently asserted, we have the democratic theory of the origin of government actually realized. This is far from the truth. In the precise words of Channing we see the reality: "the first constitution to be made by a convention specially elected for that sole purpose, and to be submitted to the voters of the state for their ratification."[3] And as for this vote of ratification, there were slightly less than 12,000 votes cast. There is every reason to accept the conclusion of Farrand: ". . . there is a vital distinction between a government being dependent upon the will of the people or of the governing class, and a government dependent upon the will of the Crown . . . but in the actual running of it, there was little or no difference . . . this meant a continuation of the old order with an aristocracy in control." [4] Their assemblies had won their contest with the executive power. In that sense did "democracy" triumph.

Within the governments thus constituted it was natural that rivalries for leadership and clash of interests should lead to the formation of opposing groups, who in turn were supported by opposing sections in the electorate. These state

---

[2] K. H. Porter, *History of the Suffrage in the United States*, 11. *See also*, F. H. Miller, "Legal Qualifications for Office in America," in *American Historical Association Report* (1899), I, 106.

[3] Edward Channing, *History of the United States*, III, 441.

[4] Max Farrand, *Development of the United States*, 55.

parties had various bases; ethnic and religious differences, disagreements as to financial policy, family rivalries, support of rival factions in the continental congress, long-standing feuds between factions formed originally upon colonial questions, and finally the quarrels that arose out of growth in population of the western areas. No faction had as yet the possibility of an effective democratic backing. And as long as the struggle for independence continued, party rivalries were somewhat limited in objective. Yet lacking permanence of issue or objective, they came more and more to comprise groups of voters and coteries of leaders who subsequently formed divisions within national parties when these came into being. They were the bases.

The problem of the creation of state constitutions to take the place of colonial charters had been solved with comparative ease. The road of self-government within each of the colonies was plainly marked. But a movement to create an inter-colonial public opinion that would back a general movement for independence and a separate existence for the British North American colonies must be upon a road hitherto un-familiar.

In this unfamiliarity lay the certainty of the appearance of a new organism. It was to be the agent of a public opinion that, in the years 1765–1775, overleaped all of the bounds of former practice. It appeared first in the committees of correspondence, found in the various colonies to exchange information and to bring about unity of action. In Massachusetts, under the leadership of Samuel Adams, and through the medium of the town meetings rather than in the assembly, such a committee system was first provided. In Virginia, there was a committee of correspondence in the House of Burgesses. Four other colonies quickly followed the example of Virginia. The objective of these extra-legal bodies was new, but their strength lay in the habit of colonial self-govern-

ment. It was a group of Virginia representatives, acting in an extra-legal capacity, that took the next step in suggesting an intercolonial congress to better accomplish the results desired. In this congress it was possible to bring about an association, "a signed agreement to pursue a given course of public action," but it remained the local units of this extra-legal edifice that made possible the acceptance of this "first working federal organization," as a body of men acting for the rebels in time of war. How completely this extra-legal organization had developed by 1774 we may judge from the statement that "The revolutionary organization was by this time so complete that it mattered little whether or not the assemblies were in session; delegates were elected none the less in a regular and orderly manner throughout the colonies." [5] The reason for this and for the strength of the Association lay in the fact that there existed "a well constructed and powerful political machine, set up in each colony, in each county, in each town, and operated with as much skill and will and unscrupulousness as go into the operation of such machines in our own time." [6] Here, indeed, appears to have been created a political party organization to accomplish what was in the period, 1765–1775, a new and pointed result; that is, to win a political victory for an intercolonial public opinion arrayed against the political purposes of the political leaders at that time in control of the British government. Of the Boston committee of correspondence, it has been written: "It provided for regular meetings, consulted with other similar bodies in the vicinity, stimulated the spread of committees in surrounding towns, kept up a correspondence with them, prepared political matter for the press, circulated it in newspapers and broadsides, matured political measures, created and guided political sentiment—

[5] Herbert Freidenwald, *Declaration of Independence*, 5.

[6] M. C. Tyler, "Party of the Loyalists," in *American Historical Review*, I, 28.

in short heated the popular temper to the boiling point of revolution and drew from it the power to act." [7]

However, these men asserted that they acted as representatives of the various colonies. Such an assertion has often obscured the reality of the political situation. The congress was an intercolonial body in which, it is true, colonies might have had representatives. Says Channing, "The word 'Congress' in its earlier political meaning connoted a meeting of ambassadors or of delegates from sovereign states. . . . It seemed to be peculiarly applicable to extra-legal revolutionary representative gatherings." [8] The congress was not the creation of these colonial governments. In origin the creation of extra-legal committees, at no time acting under a grant of authority of any kind, made up of men who, whatever their differences, were a unit in agitation for a general political purpose, the Continental Congress was in reality the convention of a political party.

Up to the meeting of the first continental congress, three divisions in public opinion were well marked. There were those who were willing to acquiesce in the measures of the British government and there were those determined at any cost not to do so. Between these divisions "lay the wavering neutral masses ready to move unresistingly in the direction" in which success seemed to lie. In such situation there were elements of strength in each of the divisions, but the great element of strength lay in the initiative and resourcefulness shown by the leaders that had ready at hand a party machine to bind together the protesting elements in all of the colonies. With the adoption of the Association this party was of full growth. What of its opponents?

The Association, wherever its adherents were active, com-

[7] E. D. Collins, "Committees of Correspondence," in *American Historical Association Report* (1901), I, 248.

[8] Edward Channing, *op. cit.*, III, 433, footnote.

pelled obedience and forced out the sentiments of seeming neutrals. The insurgent party was greatly strengthened thereby. So strong indeed, or at least so vigorous, that all except members of that party soon ceased to have a part in politics. As far as out and out loyalists were concerned, they were disfranchised in every state. But moderates, also, tended to refrain from participation. In elections to the second continental congress "a very small proportion of the people—in some localities not a hundredth part—turned out to vote." Because of these facts it is impossible to determine how large an element of the population was opposed to the movement for independence, and indeed, how large an element were actually favorable. In the words of Tyler: "No attempt at a census of political opinions was ever made during that period; and no popular vote was ever taken of a nature to indicate, even approximately, the numerical strength of the two opposing schools of political thought." [9]

Within the party of revolution there were many kinds of persons, and factions and cliques developed early in the convention of that party. There was a clearly marked line between two divisions, one led by Samuel Adams and the other by John Dickinson during the period which led up to the issuance of the Declaration of Independence. After that, and throughout the course of the armed conflict two or more groups strove for control, but all kept together in seeking the general objective. Popular interest helped. This party organization, comprising at most thirty-five members, had come into being as a result of extra-legal action in which the restricted franchise had been ignored. Here had been opened a door "through which the common freeholder and unenfranchised mechanic and artisan pushed their way into the political arena." [10] As nothing hitherto experienced in any

[9] M. C. Tyler, "Party of the Loyalists," in *American Historical Review*, I, 27.
[10] Carl Becker, *Political Parties in the Province of New York*, 22.

of the colonies, the success of this congress gave promise of the way in which subsequent American parties were to gain power.

The great pronouncement of this congress, the Declaration of Independence, was the platform of a political party. It was a statement of general principles. Its sponsors did not at the time conceive of it as descriptive of the reality of their situation; it has been in subsequent days that this document has been made to fit a rôle for which it was not intended. The difficulties which have attended attempts to realize some of its pronouncements remind one of the difficulties that frequently attend the transference of campaign pledges into statute law.

But this congress was superseded in 1781 by a body created by the governments of the various states; the Congress of the Confederation. As was to be expected, a considerable number of the former leaders appeared in the new congress. But differences are at once apparent. The representative now was formally chosen by a state legislature; that is, from a body removed from the voting population. Moreover, coincident with the creation of the formal congress, the war ended; independence was attained; the great reason for the existence of the original party no longer obtained. Congress became the scene of the bickerings of rival states, rather than the arena of political conflict among factions with a common political objective.

What was the probability that this political party would survive? Within the Congress of the Confederation the situation pointed to no certain continuance. The lack of powers, and the lack of a basic electorate would seem to insure that. Within the states there was more definite opportunity, for each state was now independent, and in the separation of powers within the governments rested the necessity of party action to bring about coördination. But there was not in any state a large electorate, nor were there evidences of continued popular interest; in fact, the contrary. After a debacle of war political leadership did not appear as an appealing prospect.

But party life in some form had been the impetus of revolution, party life had given the struggles against royal governors a considerable popular interest. In a real sense it had been the deepest incentive to party life that had brought a great proportion of the colonists to America. Moreover, in spite of the ugliness of faction, it had been party organization that had created a national sentiment for independence, and had carried on to success. It was not to be expected that such experience would be lost upon the men who in the years of the Confederation found that there was no organization which made for effective self-government in America.

Prior to the movement for independence that had given opportunity for the development of a national political party, there had existed, as we have seen, significant alignments within the several colonies which gave indication of the fundamentals of political opinion among Americans upon strictly American questions. These alignments were not entirely lost sight of in the course of the armed conflict. Some of them formed the basis of acrimonious faction that had important effects outside of a single colony. Many of these divisions survived the revolution and effected later developments within the states.

It was abundantly evident that in 1760 the differences between the eastern and western sections of the colonies were most important of all in that the bases for these differences were fundamental. In spite of the overshadowing issue of the quarrel with the mother country, the demand for equality of representation continued to be presented in the years 1765-1780.

The spread of population into western areas between 1760-1790 raised repeatedly the questions of local self-government, of representation in state assemblies and of a possible relationship to an interstate government. In areas in the mountains and west of the mountains, claimed by North Carolina and Virginia, settlers drew up agreements for their own government. That they did not contemplate independent existence

was to be expected; that they expected to participate actively, not only in their own local government but in a colonial or state government, was significant. Of these agreements it has been said; "All through these compacts runs the doctrine that the people in an unoccupied land have the right to determine their own political institutions."[11]

The realities that are often hidden in the use by different persons of similar words, may be illustrated by a comparison of the term "consent of the people" as used by settlers in the western areas, and by rebels on the sea-coast in their struggle for independence of Great Britain. As has been said repeatedly, and often with great eloquence, upon the removal of the King's power, the people of Massachusetts and indeed of each of the colonies formed a government. The people who did so were the voters in those colonies. But in the absence of colonial authority on the frontier, settlers at Watauga and at Boonesborough made agreements among themselves. And here the participants were the bulk of the members of the settlement. The vital difference in participation in government rested in a vital difference in actual living conditions.

It was this difference that was in due time to bring about fundamental changes in American political practice. It gave substance and life to Jefferson's well-known analysis of the situation in Virginia in 1781. On a broader scale this same difference was indicated by Gouverneur Morris in the Constitutional Convention of 1787 when "he thought the rule of representation ought to be so fixed as to secure to the Atlantic states a prevalence in the national councils";—having in mind "a range of new States which would soon be formed in the West."[12]

[11] F. J. Turner, "Western State Making in the Revolutionary Era," in *American Historical Review*, I, 266.

[12] Quoted by Max Farrand, "Compromises of the Constitution," in *American Historical Association Report* (1903), I, 77.

## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

For general reading: Edward Channing, *History of the United States*, III (1912); G. E. Howard, *Preliminaries of the Revolution* (1905); C. H. Van Tyne, *The American Revolution* (1905); C. H. Van Tyne, *Causes of the War of Independence*, I (1922); C. W. Alvord, *The Mississippi Valley in British Politics* (1917); J. T. Adams, *Revolutionary New England* (1691–1776), (1923); C. H. McIlwain, *The American Revolution* (1923).

Shorter accounts have sections upon this period: Max Farrand, *Development of the United States* (1918); Carl Becker, *Beginnings of the American People* (1915); E. B. Greene, *Foundations of American Nationality* (1922).

Special studies include Herbert Friedenwald, *The Declaration of Independence* (1904); Carl Becker, *Declaration of Independence* (1922); C. H. Van Tyne, *Loyalists in the American Revolution* (1902); Carl Becker, *Political Parties in the Province of New York* (1909); G. H. Alden, *New Governments West of the Alleghanies* (1897); C. H. Lincoln, *The Revolutionary Movement in Pennsylvania* (1901); Agnes Hunt, *The Provincial Committees of Safety* (1904); R. V. Harlow, *History of Legislative Method in the Period before 1825* (1917); G. D. Luetscher, *Early Political Machinery in the U. S.* (1903).

Shorter studies include M. C. Tyler, "The Party of Loyalists," in *American Historical Review*, I, 24; J. F. Jameson, "Origin of Standing Committee System in American Legislative Bodies," in *Political Science Quarterly*, IX, 246; Herbert Friedenwald, "The Continental Congress," in *American Historical Association Report* (1894), 227; F. J. Turner, "Western State Making in the Revolutionary Era," in *American Historical Review*, I, 70; Max Farrand, "The West and the American Revolution," in *Yale Review*, XVII, 44; E. D. Collins, "Committees of Correspondence of the American Revolution," in *American Historical Association Report* (1901), I, 243; P. L. Ford, "Adoption of the Pennsylvania Constitution of 1776," in *Political Science Quarterly*, X, 426; J. F. Jameson, "The Association," in *American Historical Association Report* (1917), 305.

"They [parties] have become so deeply rooted in the consciousness of the people that a proper understanding of the political history of the United States is impossible without a thorough familiarity with the underlying principles of party life and party activities."

J. W. GANNAWAY, "Real Party Forces" in
*Iowa Journal of History and Politics*, III, 515.

# CHAPTER III

## THE PARTY OF THE CONSTITUTION

*The crisis in 1786—Divisions in the Philadelphia convention—The party of the Constitution—Division within the electorate—The endorsement of the voters—The first elections under the Constitution—Extent of party activity—Use of party appellations.*

IT was amply evident that some agency quite apart from the Congress of the Confederation or provided in any one of the several state governments must be found to meet the demands for an effective government within the area ceded by Great Britain to thirteen "free, sovereign and independent States." Economic and social disorders in various sections seemed to threaten political disintegration. The party of revolution had won the right of a separate existence for those that had found British control intolerable, but, as might have been expected, this new dispensation brought with it problems entirely unfamiliar, and which called for a new type of leadership.

Here again, as in the preliminaries of the revolution, the agency was found outside of the existing forms of government. It had its inception in the interest and correspondence of a group of citizens who saw the necessity of providing a method by which the divergent groups of public opinion could be brought to a test of strength on a national scale. Representing as they did a segment of public opinion that greatly desired a more effective government, they favored the creation of some kind of national organization which they might hope to control. The first step of this party, for it was a party, even though small in numbers, was to launch a movement for a convention to revise the Articles of the Confederation.

So patent was the need of some kind of a revision that too

great weight ought not to be attached to the success of the party in inducing the Congress of the Confederation to call a convention for that purpose. The call was sent to the various state legislatures from the Annapolis meeting of representative men from five of the states, although a copy of the call was sent to the Congress of the Confederation. Late in February of 1787 the Congress finally issued a summons, adopting as its own the call of the Annapolis convention. Yet prior to that call Virginia and other states had appointed delegates. It was altogether an extra-legal beginning. But it should be noted that in the call for the convention and in the choice of delegates no expression of the will of voters was asked or secured. The delegates were designated by the state legislatures. In this particular, the medium of the party in 1786–7 was quite unlike that of the party of revolution, when by the use of extra-legal meetings, in which a considerable electorate participated, they had brought into being the Continental Congress. But the objectives of the two parties were quite unlike, and the party of the later date had to reckon with state governments of some years standing and with an already existent interstate meeting of delegates.

The convention sat for four months. Fifty-five men had a part at some time in the deliberations. As was to have been expected, because of the newness of the problems before this platform committee, there were many divergent proposals and a half dozen groups of opinion. Not only did men disagree as to the fundamentals of a general government; there was ample evidence that they represented divergent interests. With the adoption of the first resolution for the establishment of a national government " consisting of a supreme legislative, executive and judiciary," no doubt, however, remained that in the event of any report at all of the convention, it would carry with it the great objective of those who had been instrumental in bringing about an attempt at revision. It is usually stated

that there were in the convention a large state party and a small state party, and a party of southern interests and a party of northern interests. There is ample evidence of the existence of groups with such interests, but it adds greatly to the definiteness of the grouping to refer to these as groups or factions or interests, such as appear in any deliberative body, and reserve the use of the term party for the body of thirty-nine members who came to sign the document, and who appeared before the country as its sponsors.

It frequently has been pointed out that the Fathers who prepared and presented the Constitution for the consideration of the conventions in the various states were not the same Fathers that had been leaders in the party of revolution. The personnel was quite unlike. Of the fifty-five members of the convention, a dozen had been members of the Continental Congress at some time, and eleven had been members of the Congress of the Confederation. Only six had signed the Declaration of Independence and four the Articles of Confederation. But all of the leaders in the Constitutional Convention had had a part in the revolution. That the personnel was different is of considerably less importance than the fact that whereas the party of revolution had worked outside of the usual forms of election under the laws prevalent in the states, the party of the constitution was content, after the preliminary impetus, to attempt to carry its will through the medium of the various state governments, in accordance with the practices and voting restrictions of these states. This meant that the battle for the ratification must be won or lost before a voting population fixed by the restrictive provisions of the state constitutions. In the time of the armed conflict, as has been pointed out, there had been no test of the public opinion for or against the proposals of the party of revolution. In this new day there was to be a test of the voters, upon the proposals of this group of Fathers.

In this first national campaign the vote was taken not upon the document, but upon the election of delegates to state conventions to consider the document. The vote was not taken on the same day in the various states. Consequently the campaign was devoid of many of the features that we associate with national campaigns in subsequent years, and in this campaign the platform, not a candidate, was the issue.

It was to be expected that the members of the convention would play an active part in this campaign. Comprising, as they did, men of property and wealth, and being accustomed to participate in government, their intercolonial relationships were the basis for a correspondence and an interchange of information, if not of active aid. But we have little evidence of party organization.

The campaign forced out a considerable public opinion in opposition to the ratification. Here and there were leaders and groups that took measures to express their opposition. But there was no national organization, and in the states where the opposition was strong the group arrayed against the ratification was often composed of men brought together first of all upon some state issue or long standing feud of local politics.[1] Those opponents of the constitution who were of a democratic persuasion were lamed in their fight by the restricted franchise and the lack of a widespread interest.

The elements of the population that were opposed to the ratification have been grouped as follows:

"In truth, the Constitution had many foes to meet. There was a little band of irreconcilables who could see no good in making the central authority efficient, who had always opposed the extension of national authority, and knew not how

---

[1] *Cf.* C. E. Miner, *Ratification of the Federal Constitution by the State of New York*, 49; S. B. Harding, *Ratification of the Federal Constitution in Massachusetts*, 13–14.

else to act. There were men of wide influence, like Samuel Adams, who had said so much about liberty that they were not conversant with the arguments for government. There were those who had already begun to cherish sectional antagonism, fearing the development of the West, or disliking the growing power of commercial New England. There were the paper-money men and the discontented needy, who saw in the Constitution a prohibition of bills of credit and of laws impairing the obligations of contracts —a party which had just been successful in controlling the legislatures of seven states. There were those who had been indignant at the proposition to close the Mississippi and were in no mood to see federal power increased and the full right to make treaties bestowed on the central government. There was the body of the people who for a generation had listened to the enchanting oratory of liberty and could be easily aroused to dread. There were those who, living away from the busy sources of trade, saw no need of a central government with wide power of taxation and authority to regulate commerce." [2]

It was against such variety of opinion that Hamilton and Jay and Madison presented their arguments in *The Federalist*. Much has been made of these essays and there can be no question of their value as treatises in explaining the kind of government that was desired by the party of the constitution. But their value as determining compaign documents is diminished somewhat by the fact that so small a body of delegates or of voters could have been influenced by their publication. A careful student of this phase of the subject states that, in all of the votes taken, "not more than five per cent. of the population in general, or in round numbers 160,000 voters, expressed an opinion, one way or another, on the Constitution." [3]

---

[2] A. C. McLaughlin, *The Confederation and the Constitution*, 278–279.
[3] C. A. Beard, *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution*, 250.

To say that the Constitution was adopted by the people is to run the risk of general misunderstanding. As the term "will of the people" is commonly used in political discussion, such an assertion is the sheerest nonsense. That the Constitution was made for the people, speaking of them thus as the citizens of the United States, there is of course no question; it was made for all the people and not for the voters only, but the more important point at the present moment is, not for whom it was made, but by whom it was made. It was ratified by the voters, or a small proportion thereof. To call this a democratic origin is to misuse words. Much has been made of the opening, "We, the People of the United States," as has been also of sole and exclusive right of the people of Massachusetts to govern themselves as stated in the declaration of rights of that state. Of course the framers spoke of themselves as representatives of the people; they conceived of themselves as being so. But the "people," using that term in its realistic sense in the treatment of democratic origins, had in nature of conditions then existent little to do with it. And when the framers spoke of self-government and of the rights of the people they naturally had in mind the action of the people who possessed the franchise and were, therefore, in a position to make their opinion of direct power in the government. "The Constitution was not created by 'the whole people' as the jurists have said; neither was it created by 'the states' as Southern nullifiers long contended; but it was the work of a consolidated group whose interests knew no state boundaries and were truly national in their scope." [4]

It may be well at this time to point out what is believed to be a pernicious error in the use of the term "party" in reference to the vote that was taken upon the Constitution. The vote in the various states has been analyzed,[5] and it has been

---

[4] Beard, *op. cit.* 325.
[5] O. G. Libby, *Geographic Distribution of the Vote on the Constitution.*

stated not only "that the support of the Constitution came from the centers of capitalistic interest and the opposition from agrarians and those burdened with debts,"[6] but also there has come to be a general belief that in this alignment and distribution we see drawn up the members of two political parties. That there were two divisions of public opinion upon the issue as presented is unquestionably true, but the parties of men for and against were small in number. No clear thinking can follow upon a consideration of a single vote when unaccompanied by other activity, as sufficient to determine membership in a party that as yet has no definite and widespread organization. And that journalists and candidates called themselves by party names and appealed for party support does not in the least invalidate such a conclusion. Men and candidates, then, as now, were prone to refer to party strength when they meant the strength of a certain segment of public opinion. To speak of the mind or the will of a party, meaning thereby a large segment of public opinion, is to speak of something that did not exist.

It devolved upon the Congress of the Confederation to fix the date for the first elections under the Constitution. Eleven states had ratified the Constitution in time to provide for a participation in these elections. Time was needed, for it rested with the states to select the mode of appointing electors. The legislatures of five states provided that a vote of the electorate should be taken upon electors. In five states sessions were not summoned in time to provide for elections and thus the legislatures chose the electors. The legislature of New York was unable to reach a decision as to method, and thus New York cast no vote in the first presidential election.

Because in six of the eleven states there was no vote of the electorate, no valuable estimate can be made of a national vote for Presidential electors in 1789. In those states in which

[6] C. A. Beard, *Economic Origins of Jeffersonian Democracy*, 9.

a vote was taken there was of course a restricted franchise, and, moreover, comparatively little interest among the majority of those eligible to vote. Some indication of the extent of the possible electorate may be gathered from the vote cast for Representatives in Congress, who were to be chosen "by the people of the several states," the suffrage being extended to those entitled to vote "for the most numerous branch of the state legislature." These elections were being held in the same period. Careful estimates have placed the maximum vote at 125,000 or about three and one half per cent. of the total free population. Generally speaking, the right to vote rested upon the possession of a freehold or evidence of taxpaying. Nor should it be forgotten that restriction upon office-holding materially limited the number eligible to receive votes in these elections. These limitations and the lack of interest among those entitled to vote has led to a conclusion, thus succinctly stated by Paullin:

"The voting was done chiefly by a small minority of interested property holders, a disproportionate share of whom in the northern States resided in the towns, and the wealthier and more talented of whom like a close corporation controlled the politics." [7]

But within this minority there was division in these elections. Such division does not in itself indicate the general acceptance of political parties, as we now use the term. Within voting bodies of various kinds there are usually divisions at time of election of officers; and frequently such divisions indicate personal preference or personal popularity rather than the existence of groups disagreeing either in platform or policy. That in choosing electors there should be unanimity was not to be expected; and the same was true in the case of the selection of Representatives by vote of the electorate and of Senators

[7] C. O. Paullin, "First Elections under the Constitution," in *Iowa Journal of History and Politics*, II, 32.

by the state legislatures. The divisions of the vote, then, in the states in which records are available are not safe criteria of the strength of political parties, particularly as sufficient evidence cannot be presented to show the general acceptance of party organization and its candidates.

We would expect to find an organization of men intent upon the choice of electors, representatives and senators who could be trusted to carry on the work of the majority of the Constitutional Convention. The ratification of that instrument, accomplished, as it was, by a narrow margin, must have indicated not only the necessity of caution but also the probability of great labor to insure success in the first elections. For presumably these successes must be won among the same electors who had voted upon ratification and accepted it by so narrow a margin. There were, however, differences in the new contest; these were contests upon candidacies of persons, and not directly upon an issue, and there were three tests— upon electors, upon representatives and upon senators. There was a greater call for a unity—only possible through organization—than in the contest on ratification.

There is abundant evidence that those who had labored to provide the Constitution were awake to the need of electing men favorable to the success of the new government. There is evidence, also, that men who had opposed the ratification were anxious to elect men who would watch with jealous eye the development of power of the new government. Such an aftermath of the struggle over ratification was to be expected; but the continuance of such oppositions does not in itself prove the general acceptance of political parties. It was a fertile field for the development of party organization. The need was apparent to all.

As a matter of fact, evidence of the existence of party organization is meager. Conventions were held in Pennsylvania and tickets presented by these conventions. These were supposed

to express the purposes of those who had favored and those who had opposed the Constitution, but each ticket contained names of persons known to be of the opposite record. In several of the states the terms "Federal" and "Anti-Federal" were used in the elections, indicating the purpose of some to see a continuance of the battle over ratification, but as often, doubtless, the use of the terms was induced by desire to win, rather than by call to describe exactly an existing situation. Certainly a candidate could be "anti-Federalist" without organization.

Because of his later career as party leader, the activity of Hamilton in this campaign has been of peculiar interest. He conceived of the elections as a continuance of battle over ratification, and he was anxious as to the outcome. He surveyed conditions with care and gave evidence of his skill in reading public sentiment. He also revealed the divisions in the party of the Constitution, but most of all the lack of party organization and machinery considered so essential to partisan conflict.

Lists of electors, representatives and senators of 1788–89 with the party appellation "Federalist" and "Anti-Federalist" are, then, misleading. Understood as indicating the belief or general attitude of an individual they are helpful and probably fairly accurate, if application is confined to the time of election. But when those of "Federalist" leaning are totaled and it is stated that the "Federalist" party had forty-five representatives and twenty senators as a result of these elections, the conclusion is inadmissible. No profitable result can accrue from assuming that party lines were drawn in the first election, and that the electorate divided in such manner.

Light upon this point may be gathered from a glance at the vote of the presidential electors. When on April 6th, 1789, a quorum of newly elected senators was in attendance, the

Senate organized to the extent of electing a presiding officer. In a joint session of the two bodies, this officer opened and counted the votes of the electors, and the result was announced. All sixty-nine electors, whatever their appellation in the election, cast their votes for Washington, and thirty-four cast their votes also for Adams, electing him to the Vice-Presidency. But there were thirty-five votes for ten other men. It is known that certain of these votes were diverted from Adams upon advice of Hamilton. This is evidence, not of party organization, but of his personal influence at the time. And that ten men should be voted for is additional evidence that a party of opposition had not been organized.

As has been frequently pointed out, there was a period of several months in the winter and spring of 1788-89 when the people of the United States were without a central government of any kind. Not after the meeting of October 10, 1788, was there a quorum present in the Congress of the Confederation, and it was, as we have seen, near the end of the first week in April before a sufficient number of members of the Senate and House of Representatives reached New York and made possible the organization of the Congress under the Constitution.

## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

For general reading, Edward Channing, *History of the United States*, III (1912); A. C. McLaughlin, *The Confederation and the Constitution* (1906); Max Farrand, *The Framing of the Constitution* (1913); R. L. Schuyler, *The Constitution of the United States* (1923).

Shorter accounts having sections upon this period, Allen Johnson, *Union and Democracy* (1915); Max Farrand, *The Development of the United States* (1918).

Special studies include: C. A. Beard, *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution* (1913); O. G. Libby, *Geographic Distribution of the Vote on the Federal Constitution* (1894); S. B. Harding, *Ratifica-*

"Parties have been organized far more elaborately in the United States than anywhere else in the world, and have passed more completely under the control of a professional class. The party organizations in fact form a second body of political machinery, existing side by side with that of the legally constituted government, and scarcely less complicated."

JAMES BRYCE, *The American Commonwealth*, I, 6.

# CHAPTER IV

## THE FIRST PARTY GOVERNMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

Beginnings of political life in 1789—The position of Washington—Congressional activity—Hamilton and a party in Congress—Development of a party of opposition—Two conceptions of party—The great division—Clash of organizations—Election of 1800 and the voter.

WHEN, on April 30, 1789, George Washington took the oath of office prescribed in the Constitution for the President of the United States, he and the Congress before whom he read his inaugural address embodied a possible solution for a most perplexing problem. For thirteen years this problem had agitated the several states. It had presented itself when the group of men in the intercolonial congress purporting to speak for the several colonies had in the Declaration of Independence voted "to dissolve the political bands" that had hitherto bound them to the King and Parliament of Great Britain. For this assertion by act of revolution had not been followed by provision of a substitute for either King or Parliament. Each colony had constituted itself an independent commonwealth. As we have seen, each had sent representatives to a Continental Congress, and after considerable delay all had entered a loose Confederation. But even to the Congress, or annual meeting of the representatives of the various states of this Confederation, no power of taxation had been given, such as had been claimed and exercised by the Parliament, and no executive whatever had been provided to take the place of the King, either as a central administrator or as a symbol of the united power of the states.

Agitation to find or force a solution had increased, as it had

become evident that neither in domestic affairs nor in the relationships with the nations of Europe were the several colonial governments capable of controlling the forces set in motion by the winning of independence in 1783. It had been as a result of the initiative of a small group of men, among them Hamilton, Madison and Washington, that a convention had been called to consider amendments to the Articles of Confederation. The convention had voted at once to establish a central government with executive and legislative powers. This constituted a promise of a solution of the difficulties. At the end of a close and bitter struggle, ratification of this new constitution by nine states made it, by the words of the instrument itself, the law of the land for those states, and for others as they chose to adopt it. A door had been opened upon a promising prospect, but one utterly unlike anything with which Americans had been familiar.

With the appearance of an Executive and a Congress as provided in the Constitution the problem of 1776 had been met boldly and, as the event proved, completely. Here then begins the political life of the people of the United States as far as that life may be represented in a common government, reflected in the actions of officials in charge of that government and registered by the voters of all the states in elections upon national issues. After 1789 it is possible to follow the development of purposeful national political action, and profitable search may be made for the appearance of agencies for the formulation and direction of national public opinion and for the translation of that opinion into governmental action.

By general consent Washington had been chosen President. He had been a member of the group early interested in the revision of the Articles of Confederation. He had been a member of the Constitutional convention, and although acting as its presiding officer, his opinions had been well-known. He saw great hope in the experiment of a national

government. He came to the administration of the great task under a constitution, not as an outsider called in to act as a mediator, but as a member of the party that had brought the new government into being. He called to aid him in this work no man who had opposed the ratification of the constitution. It was not a non-partisan government that was to have trial.

The president in his inaugural address made no suggestions as to the legislative policy of the government. Upon the Congress fell this task of taking the initiative in legislation. Nor was it an entirely new problem for the greater number of them. For forty-four of them had been in the Constitutional convention or in conventions that had been called to consider it. Of these all except seven had been favorable to its ratification. Of the entire membership of the Congress only a handful could be counted on to oppose the administration, if opposition to the launching of the government is taken as the basis. Using such a basis there were ten opponents in the House and two in the Senate. That there were so few is but another indication of the weakness of party interest and the lack of party tradition, for it was certainly incumbent upon all those who took their opposition to the Constitution seriously to take steps toward controlling, or at least modifying, the new government.

Such a problem in politics as faced these members of the House and Senate in 1789 was quite unknown to their experience or that of their forbears in America, except to a limited extent in the recent period of state government. The Congress of the Confederation, and, before that, the Continental Congress, had proceeded as a group of representatives of independent states, and, unhampered by the existence of an executive power, as well as controlled by a limitation of powers, had never felt it necessary to face the task of operating an effective government machine. Within the several states,

but recently colonies, there had been but a short experience, and not a happy one, in the operation of the entire machine. But under the Constitution the Congress was under the necessity of coöperating with the President, who although elected in an indirect way, was in reality responsible to the same body of voters that gave them their mandate. In this need of coöperation rested the first problem of politics in the new government.[1]

To meet this need there appeared an administration party in the Congress. As has been stated, a great majority of the Congress inclined to work together to launch the experiment; but such an inclination and the proof of a favor to the Constitution does not in itself constitute a party, but only a favorable opinion in which a party organization might appear and work its will. The initiative in this matter came from outside the Congress, in the activity of Alexander Hamilton, Secretary of the Treasury.

In one of the essays of *The Federalist*, Hamilton had written of faction in such a way as to indicate clearly that he expected in the new government parties of the kind familiar to the various colonies and states; that is, factions among the leaders. He apparently did not anticipate that such a party as had made the revolution possible would continue. The nation was unfamiliar with democratic organization. To think of party in terms of a comparatively few men was natural. Hamilton had watched the elections of 1788 and commented upon them from this point of view.

The reports of Hamilton to the Congress were the basis for legislation providing for a funding of the public debt, an assumption of the debts of the states, the establishment of a

---

[1] ". . . to haphazard arrangements, or to voluntary associations unknown to the law and unknown to the theory of the state was left] the difficult task that was in itself the great problem of democracy." A. C. McLaughlin, *The Courts, the Constitution and Parties*, 112–113. See also F. J. Goodnow, *Politics and Administration*, 153.

bank, and a protection of American industry. To accomplish this result, the Secretary did more than prepare reports; he named committees, attended committee meetings, and by the use of personal influence carried the measures. The real work of the session was done in the secret session of the group that were responsive to Hamilton. The term caucus was not used; but the practice was that of a caucus. "In this organization, unknown to the Constitution and beyond the reach of the rules of either chamber the executive could work with the party-following in Congress and secure the adoption of a prearranged program." [2]

It has been argued that in spite of the existence of this bloc of votes in Congress and in spite of the evidence that with information and conviction the Hamilton group did accomplish much in the first Congress, Hamilton did not become the leader of a party. This denial is based upon the assumption that party exists, and recognizes leadership, only in the evidence presented of straight party voting in the Congress and in the electorate in support of such party and leadership. [3] In such manner we have come subsequently to measure party strength; that is, at the polls and in the Congress. But such a measure of party strength is the result of the democratic organization of parties that came in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Such parties were unknown to the colonists, and such parties had not yet developed for reasons which have been advanced. But parties, in the sense of groups of men coöperating in legislatures and in the restricted electorate, were familiar. They were the agencies for accomplishing results in government. Of this party Hamilton was by general admission the intellectual leader; in the mastery of the

---

[2] R. V. Harlow, *History of Legislative Method*, 145.

[3] For elaborate presentation of this view see, O. G. Libby, "Political Factions in Washington's Administration," in *Quarterly Journal, University of North Dakota*, III, 297.

party organization he was leader as well. Consequently in a most important sense the party of Hamilton in the Congress may be looked upon not only as carrying forward the task of the party of the Constitution, but as the agency for the first party government under the Constitution. As in every party movement, there were many elements that came to the support of this group, not only in the Congress but within the electorate.

From another angle we may conceive of Hamilton as not only a leader in the development of a governmental policy, but also as a party leader. Contrast his position at the time with that of President Washington. Hamilton had prepared the reports, and it was Hamilton who was associated with the persons interested in the establishment of sound credit. It was he who exerted himself to carry assumption, and who prepared the masterly paper on constitutional powers that became the basis of the President's acceptance of a National Bank. As for the President, he signed the bills as presented to him, thus completing the creation of these pillars in the Hamilton edifice. Favorable to these measures he was, but it was Hamilton who gave opportunity in the First Congress for an alignment upon the fundamental points in constitutional interpretation.

It was natural that there should develop an opposition to this active participation by the Secretary of the Treasury in the business of the Congress. His part in the formal proceedings of the House soon ceased, for in the second session the House refused to permit him to appear before it. This ban put an end to a natural development of coöperation between the legislative and executive branches of the government. As the necessity for such coöperation was not removed by such action of the House, two results followed quickly. The extra-legal association of the Secretary and members of the House increased in importance; and there appeared in the House a

means of organizing for business—the standing committee system.  In the failure to accomplish unity of administration through a ministerial leadership lay the necessity for the development of a party machinery confined to the Congress.

The activity of Hamilton had seemed to justify many of the fears of those who had opposed the Constitution.  And among the few of this opinion who had come to have a part in the government existed the beginning of a party of opposition. Those who, in the debates upon the proposals of the Secretary of Treasury, became identified with a narrower view of the powers of government were considered as opponents of the administration.  There is no evidence of organization of these elements in the early sessions.  It is not conclusive that the Secretary was barred from the House, nor that all measures of the administration were not carried, for an examination of votes shows that divisions were widely scattered.

The supporters of the administration did not agree in following the leadership of Hamilton.  Nor was this to be expected, when one recalls the divisions of opinion within the Constitutional convention.  Madison, the ablest member of the House, who acted in many respects at first as the mouthpiece of the administration, early drew away.  Madison later attributed his change to the fact that Hamilton made plain his intention to have a strong government—quite unlike, thought Madison, the intention of the framers of the Constitution.  But the great opposition came to be centered in the person of one of the President's advisors, Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson had been in France during the period of the making of the Constitution, and had had some misgivings as he contemplated the possible strength of the proposed government.  But he had advised ratification, and upon his return had accepted the offer of Washington to take charge of the Department of State.  This acceptance carried with it no admission to the inner group that had made up in

the beginning the party of the constitution, nor is there any reason why it should have done so. Hamilton and Jefferson soon differed upon many of the matters confronting the administration. Jefferson, in face of the need of an agency with which to oppose the program of the Secretary of the Treasury, naturally turned not only to the task of organizing a group of leaders, but also to the task of arousing the voters and of convincing them that the personnel of the government needed changing. By the summer of 1792 this organization was well recognized. There is no evidence of a meeting in 1792, but it was generally understood that those electors opposed to Hamilton's financial policy would support George Clinton, who had been opposed to the adoption of the Constitution.

It was not surprising that the more democratic elements of the electorate should organize clubs to aid them in their fight. The Democratic societies that were the centers of party activity in the years 1793–5 were pledged to promote "a real and genuine Republicanism." The liking of many of the members for the French is sufficient to explain their use of the word "Republican." Jefferson had used it in a letter to Washington in 1792. And "Democratic" was after all not an exact appellation for the Jefferson democracy. Yet although we know comparatively little of the inner workings of these political clubs, we learn that they believed in the people as the fountain-head of authority, and that they saw in the movement for independence the movement for the transfers of art of government from the few to the many. "In these organizations the voice of the disfranchised classes was articulate for the first time. With unprecedented virulence these Democrats attacked not only policies but personalities." [4] Their hopes had not been realized under the new government as they saw it. They aimed at a more democratic franchise. Recognition

[4] Allen Johnson, *Union and Democracy*, 75.

of their political place came in their denunciation by Washington in 1794 as self-created societies that had no good place in the country. In the use of the term self-created, and in the fact that they were so created, we see the differing views of those who would keep the actual operating agency within the government and thus confined to leaders; and those who saw in an organization of the voters themselves the vital power that made possible an organization of public opinion.

Such denunciation was natural in that the success of these clubs meant the overthrow of the leaders then in control. There was a steady increase in the total number of votes cast, and since there was little widening of the suffrage during this period, the increase was to be attributed to an aroused interest on the part of the voter. The House of Representatives that took office in 1793 was understood to contain a majority opposed to the group dominated by Hamilton. The House during the following four years transacted its business by use of committees, but it is impossible to trace in this period any party organization of the Republican leaders, in the House.

How powerful the Hamilton group were during the second administration of Washington may be seen best in the action of the Senate in matters relating to foreign affairs. The crux of the political problem was the sending of Jay to England, and the ratification of the treaty that he brought back with him. Jefferson had in 1793 recognized that the matter of an English treaty was all important in determining a party alignment, and looked upon the appointment of Jay and the subsequent developments as the attempt of a minority party to work its will through a control of the Senate and the executive. Of this power Hayden has written:

"Probably the outstanding point in connection with the negotiation of the treaty, however, is the extent to which a small group of Federalist Senators, who were also among

Washington's most trusted advisers, dominated the entire proceeding. These men suggested the mission; they secured its acceptance by the President, and practically directed the selection of the envoy; they secured his confirmation by the Senate; they sent him out fully cognizant with their views as to what sort of a treaty should be striven for and under very flexible instructions from the Department of State."

". . . in the procedure of the Senate after the treaty had been laid before them . . . the influence of the same leaders, possessing the confidence both of the Senate and of the President, was sufficient to control the situation and largely determined the action of the Senate throughout the session." [5]

The Hamiltonian organization chose to support John Adams for the Presidency, knowing by experience that he was not a "good party man," but relying upon the extra-legal features of their party organization to work their will in the government. Adams' action in retaining the Washington Cabinet aided greatly, for each of them had been in the habit of consulting with Hamilton, and they continued to do so. They regarded Hamilton and not Adams as their leader. Indeed, that Adams did retain the Cabinet, knowing, as he must have known, their general attitude, is indication that he did not consider himself at the head of a party, any more than his predecessor had been.

Adams, however, unlike Washington, differed with the party organization to the point of open hostility. He was by nature opposed to the guidance of any clique, particularly militaristic or professional. His conduct of our relations with France was a personal affair. This is the more important in that the French relations—as the English relations—were subjects of bitterest dispute between groups of leaders. His course gave him great popularity among the people. This popularity

[5] Ralston Hayden, *The Senate and Treaties* (1789–1817), 92.

brought success to candidates who termed themselves Federalists, and who upon election to office were subject to the guidance of the Federalist party organization. Then, too, at this time a candidate might easily run as a "Federalist" with his eyes on the Constitution, rather than on either Adams or the Federalist group. But neither Adams nor Hamilton was responsible for the legislation that gave the Federalist party its concluding reputation.

The aggressive tone forced from President Adams by the insulting action of the representatives of the French government gave that needed additional impetus to the movement that now placed the extremists in absolute control of the Federalist organization. They were in a great majority in both Houses of Congress. The initiative was now taken by the Federalist group in the Senate, in proposing acts, dealing with aliens, and with matters of sedition. A new law of June 18, 1798, provided that fourteen years of residence, and a declaration of intention five years prior to application, was necessary to naturalization. This rule was not to apply to aliens already in the United States. To deal with such aliens, two laws were passed, clothing the President with drastic powers in time of peace and in time of war, and providing for the enforcement of the laws by United States marshals. In the following month the height of positive action was taken in the passage of measures, the most violent of which made it a misdemeanor to publish false or malicious writing against the government of the United States, the President or Congress, with the purpose of stirring up hatred or resistance against them. This provision was included in what is known as the Sedition Act of 1798.

Not only were these measures the result of party action with extreme partisans in the lead; they were party measures in a much more positive sense. In the first place they were designed to strike directly, and, it was hoped, with deadly

result at the party organization of the men who were opposing the rule of the Federalist clique. In the second place, the passage of acts tending to suppress criticism of government officials struck directly at right of free speech. Both the practice of political agitation and the right of criticism of officials seemed to many an American by 1798 as fundamentals, inherent in American political life.

Republican members of Congress protested. But had the Republican party organization no additional weapon in such a crisis? In the words of the Constitutional Society of Boston in 1795, all depended upon "the actual information of all." Jefferson, who had retired from public life in 1793, was in the habit of holding party conferences at his home at Monticello. At one of these conferences, at which Madison and Monroe were present, Jefferson drew up a set of resolutions. These were sent by messenger to Kentucky, and there introduced and adopted in November, 1798. Subsequently Madison prepared the declarations known as the Virginia resolutions. Although these were not indorsed by any state legislatures, and were denounced by four of them, yet they stand as positive and public utterances of the Republican party group at the time. "By recalling the party to its original position of opposition to the consolidating tendencies of federalism, the resolutions of 1798 served the purposes of a modern platform."

Such a procedure was in line with the general attitude of the Republican leaders that relied upon popular interest to further their desires. And popular interest was increasing. It was, as tested by the vote cast, nearly twice what it had been twelve years before. Moreover, in three new states there was manhood suffrage. An indication of the outcome of this reliance upon the common man, rather than upon the leaders, rested in the fact that in New York, for example, two thirds of the renters who were mechanics were members of Democratic clubs.

It is not until the election of 1800 that an alignment of parties among the voters, as among the leaders, became distinct. But among the leaders, the division of opinion had come by 1799 to be thought of as Jefferson had described it a year before: "It is now well understood that two political sects have arisen within the United States, the one believing that the executive is the branch of our government which most needs support, the other that like the analogous branch in the English Government, it is already too strong for the republican part of the Constitution." Now after an examination of the way in which the vital conflict of the preceding ten years had been between two cliques of leaders, it should be evident that such an explanation of the conflict is the expression of a partisan, not that of a careful observer. To win control of the government the Jefferson group must obtain the executive power; hence an attack upon that power was to be expected.

But even though it must be insisted that there were in the twelve years of Federalist government no popular political parties, and that the party fighting of the period was that of cliques of leaders and the outgrowth of factional divisions within the various states, it must be as positively emphasized that the lines of cleavage within the body of public opinion were becoming more and more clearly marked in these years of hesitating self-government. Two great streams of contentious disputation were running more and more strongly. These streams were fed by many sources of interest, sympathy and prejudice. The great coloring element of the period was furnished by our relations with foreign powers. But the body of the stream in each case had been existent prior to the establishment of the French Republic, or the American revolt from Great Britain. A recognition of such a basic division led W. G. Sumner to the brilliant generalizations in which he spoke of one party as those of property, education and char-

acter, while of the other he said that they confounded liberty with equality, and political virtue with tenacity of rights.[6]

But such a division of public opinion need not necessarily lead to the existence of the two powerful political parties.[7] Within each of these two groups were many subdivisions, and each of these might easily become an agency for the expression of a peculiar purpose, or a special interest. More probable still, leadership by state or section might seem to promise numerous personal parties. But despite this, it was evident from the beginning that two parties were to have the field. Obviously not because there were only two possible views of the Jay treaty, or of the French Revolution, or of the measures of Hamilton or of the true interpretation of the Constitution. There were many views. But in purposeful contention in debate or action there must be concentration of effort. Two antagonists make a decisive outcome almost certain. In government an opposition that can concentrate all the powers of attack is as essential as that the group in power shall have cohesion and decision.

An attempt has been made in recent years to confine the vital contest to one between the capitalist and the democratic pioneer, and to identify the two great parties with the economic doctrines and purposes of these two great groups. That these two groups existed from the earliest colonial days is now recognized, and that men within each group saw in the clash of these interests the great political battle of the day is of course true. That is the habit of man as a party leader. But it is hardly necessary to point out that such a clear-cut division in public opinion is only one of many that have made up the life of political parties.

[6] W. G. Sumner, "Politics in America (1776–1876)," in *North American Review*, CXXII, 49–50.

[7] The distinction is clearly stated in A. C. McLaughlin, *The Courts, the Constitution and Parties*, 152–153.

Had it been possible from the beginning of colonization, or even of the government under the Constitution, for the capitalistic interests of the country to unite and form a party that should exist in politics as such a party, exclusively, and presenting such a view, and comprising such a personnel, to continue to live and to exercise power, a history of such a party could be written. Moreover, had it been true from the beginning that the democratic pioneers had both political interest and political rights, and had it been possible for them to unite their efforts and to comprise a party that continued to reveal, as the individuals improved their economic status, these democratic views, it would be possible to write the history of such a party.

But of course no such parties have existed. There have been powerful tendencies within public opinion that have struggled for expression, and that have used men and groups for their purposes. In turn, men and groups have appealed to these tendencies in making up their platforms, and determining their course in office. Party in agitation and in government has been a complex affair, in its bases, its purposes, and its methods. But there have been party organizations. The history of their activities, rather than their beliefs, is a matter of primary importance.

Divisions of public opinion, even when they come to be clearly discernible among the voters, are not definite guides to party strength. The safest guide is that found in the party organizations. Having determined their existence, personnel and programs, test in elections the appeal of these bodies to public opinion. In 1800 there were party organizations which presented Adams and Jefferson as rival candidates. There were no formally adopted platforms. It was clearly understood, however, that the election of Jefferson would place in control of the government a clique of leaders pledged to "democratic reforms."

The vote of 1800 exceeded that of 1796, and Adams received more votes, outside of New York, than in 1796. In New York he was defeated, as he had not been in 1796. He lost the electoral votes of this state, because of the success of Aaron Burr in capturing control of the Republican organization, and through it, of the state. Hamilton definitely and publicly repudiated Adams toward the close of the canvass. Adams had previously parted company with the members of the cabinet closest to Hamilton. Such bickering is evidence of their conception of party. The basic weakness was shown in Jay's unwillingness to follow Hamilton in 1799. Channing writes of the loss of the election:

"It is impossible to trace any connection whatever between the Alien and Sedition laws and the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions on the one hand, and the defeat of Adams, on the other." [8]

"The election of 1800 turned upon New York, Pennsylvania and South Carolina. In these States parties were so nearly equal that the change of 214 votes in New York City, the sickness or death of a couple of assemblymen in Pennsylvania, or the shifting of the political allegiance of half a dozen members of the South Carolina assembly might have altered the whole course of political history and, indeed, of all kinds of history in America. In ten or eleven States presidential electors were chosen by the legislatures; in five by the voters directly, and in all public opinion was so evenly balanced that presidential elections were largely a matter of political accident,—the 'people' had little to do with them." [9]

The result gave seventy-three electoral votes to Jefferson and to Burr, and thus, under the provision of the Constitution, the choice was to be made by the House of Representatives. The strength of the Federalist organization was revealed at the

[8] Edward Channing, *Hist. of the U. S.*, IV, 232.
[9] *Ibid*, 211. *See*, however, C. A. Beard, *Jeffersonian Democracy*, 353–414.

very end of the Adams administration in the ability of Hamilton to bring about by votes of Federalist members of Congress the election of Jefferson, rather than that of Burr. Such a task must have been to the liking of such a party leader as Hamilton. Ability to deal with men in office, rather than with the voter, was both the strength and the weakness of the great leader of the Federalist party.

The inauguration of Jefferson brought to a close the period during which a comparatively small group of men had provided for the United States its first party government. Neither President in those twelve years had been the leader of this group; both had recognized it, but in varying degrees. Much of the legislation, and a considerable number of executive acts of the period cannot be traced to this party organization. But, throughout, it formed a nucleus of activity that gave life to the government.

This group had in the beginning the support of powerful elements of the electorate that had given support to the Constitution. Gradually appeared in every part of the country a considerable segment of the population that followed the guidance of these party leaders. They called themselves Federalists, and presented and voted Federalist tickets. But there is little evidence of party organization among the voters, and indeed the Federalist conception of party as defined and acted on by Hamilton forbade any such development.

This type of party—the first type to have its day in national party development—had its prototype in the various states, and before them in the colonies. It was based, of course, in large measure upon parties and factions within the several states. It was similar to party types in England—as similar as was possible under different forms of government. Hamilton's attempt to lead the House on the first session was an indication of his conception of what party would be. And it was party in the English sense—a group of leaders presenting

upon occasion their actions to the country for approval or disapproval. The leader, not the voter, was the basic quality.

Naturally these men, associated together, as were their opponents, for the purpose of attaining the results they desired in government, did not conceive of the party as the popular leaders had done. Party to the advocate of popular control consisted of all the members of the electorate of a particular purpose. This party was the popular creation of a political engine powerful enough to drive the government. It had leaders, but its strength lay in its democracy. The party of the other group was an organization of a few men combined for the purpose of conducting the government for the mass of men.

At the outset of the struggle between the two each had elements of strength. The belief in democracy, the reliance on the electorate, the legacy of a long struggle against outside rule, all served to favor success for a party that was an expression of popular will. But the limitations upon the suffrage, the upsetting conditions of a period of reconstruction, the long tradition of a reliance upon leadership in matters of administration, all would seem to give advantage to men who conceived of party as an association of leaders, who prepared programs for the electorate to indorse.

These conceptions of party had clashed on a national scale for the first time in the elections upon the adoption of the Constitution. We find the various propositions considered against a background of a fundamental disagreement as to the agency that should make this government possible. Not that parties were considered. They were not. But the conceptions of party existed; that of dependence upon the mass; that of reliance upon a few.

The second was not a new development in America. Parties in the sense of groups of leaders, disagreeing upon policies, were familiar. Party in this sense was natural in a state where

there was little popular participation.  But party in the first sense was the product of conditions peculiar to America. From the outset there had been greater self-government, and the participation in this government had increased as the frontier had advanced.  The economic equality possible in a new land had produced a desire for a political equality.  Such a conception of party naturally appeared.

There were elements of likeness in these conceptions of party.  Both had to have leaders; both had to submit to the voters.  But in one the leaders were responsive to a great body of men who constituted the party; in the other no such body of control was considered.  In one the polls were a guide to desires of public opinion; in the other it was a test upon policies.  Consequently these two conceptions gave rise to the need of two parties, and as the electorate was divided upon some such general basis in 1800 the two parties were accepted.

But the "triumph of the Republicans" in 1800 was not the result of an uprising of the people, nor was it, as often pictured, the victory of a party of numbers.[10]  The vote shows that the "people" had little to do with it, but that it was the success of a number of different groups of leaders in various states of the union, who had won the support of a majority of the members of the electorate, and who, by joining their forces under a common party name, had secured a majority of the votes in the electoral college for the nominees of a caucus of Republican members of the Congress.  And the Federalist members had confirmed that choice in the selection of Jefferson.  The Republican party of 1800, like the Federalist party, was little more than a division of the governing class.

Yet the manner in which support for Republican leaders had been won, the elements of the electorate to which appeal

[10] "By 'the people' the earlier writers meant the active members of a political organization who were supposed to speak for the whole number," Channing, *op. cit.*, IV, 212.

was made, and the enlargement of the franchise and the reasons advanced in its favor, all foreshadowed the further development of quite a different type of party. W. G. Sumner calls it "the first triumph of the tendency toward democracy." This type had appeared in the party of revolution; it had given significance to the work of the Democratic Clubs. Such a development it was that excited the intense opposition of innumerable Federalist leaders;[11] it moved Adams to vigorous protest; it is the explanation of the warmth of Washington's warning against parties in his Farewell Address. Parties in the sense of leaders he gave ample evidence of supporting during his administration and later. But against self-created societies he wrote: "All combinations and associations, under whatever plausible character, with the real design to direct, control, counteract or awe, the regular deliberation and action of the constituted authorities are destructive of this fundamental principle [orderly government], and of fatal tendency. They serve to organize faction; to give it an artificial and extraordinary force; to put in place of the delegated will of the Nation, the will of a party, often a small but artful and enterprising minority of the community."

From the point of view of the student of party history, the great task which the Republican leaders encountered prior to 1800 was to explain that opposition to the administration was not disloyalty to the government provided by the Constitution. Prior to the Revolution, opposition to the rule of governors had been indicative of loyalty to colonial interests; but in the course of the Revolution opposition to the prevailing governments had been indicative of disloyalty to American interests. The tendency of the Federalist group

---

[11] "The modern idea of party as an association of citizens aiming at the expression of legislative and administrative policies through the control of governmental machinery had not yet been accepted. Perhaps the attitude of the Federalists on this matter constitutes the best evidence of class rule," W. A. Robinson, *Jeffersonian Democracy in New England*, 523.

was to emphasize the continuance of this alignment of the period of the Revolution. The view of the Republicans was that such an alignment had disappeared with achievement of Independence and the establishment of the National Government, as of course it had. In its place appeared, said the Republican leaders, the possibility of disagreement among citizens as to how, and by whom, their common government should be operated. The need of this explanation shows the necessity of examining party action of this period with great care.

## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Works of general reference on political development include: Edward Channing, *History of the United States*, IV (1917); J. S. Bassett, *The Federalist System* (1906); Edward Channing, *The Jeffersonian System* (1905); Max Farrand, *The Fathers of the Constitution* (1921).

Sections of the following will be helpful: Allen Johnson, *Union and Democracy* (1915); Max Farrand, *The Development of the United States* (1918).

Special studies include: G. D. Luetscher, *Early Political Machinery in the United States* (1903); R. V. Harlow, *History of Legislative Method in the Period before 1825* (1917); W. A. Robinson, *Jeffersonian Democracy in New England* (1916); Ralston Hayden, *The Senate and Treaties, 1789–1817* (1920); C. A. Beard, *Economic Origins of Jeffersonian Democracy* (1915).

Special articles include: O. G. Libby, "A Sketch of Political Parties in the United States," in *Quarterly Journal of the University of North Dakota*, II, 205; also "Political Factions in Washington's Administration," *ibid.*, III, 293; W. C. Ford, "Letters from Joseph Jones to Madison," in *Massachusetts Historical Society Proceedings*, Second Series, XV, 116; U. B. Phillipps, "The South Carolina Federalists," in *American Historical Review*, XIV, 529; A. D. Morse, "Causes and Consequences of the Party Revolution of 1800," in *American Historical Association Report* (1894), 531.

"The origin of our parties is therefore to be sought in the variation of social types incident to the westward movement of population from the Atlantic coast, and our party history is closely connected at every epoch with the changes resulting from each stage of the westward advance. It was the development of a group of inland settlements differing in important ways from the coast communities which first gave rise to those conflicting economic interests and social ideals which have furnished the causes of party groupings throughout our history."

H. C. HOCKETT, *Western Influences on Political Parties to 1825*, p. 9.

# CHAPTER V

## THE RULE OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY

*The Republican party organization—Development of insurgency—The activity of the Federalist organization—Rise of a congressional machine—Factions and rivalries within the Republican party—Rise of Mississippi Valley democracy—Popular interest and personal leadership.*

JEFFERSON came to the Presidency the acknowledged leader of the group of men who had won the support of the electorate in the elections of 1800. He was therefore the first of the Presidents who was to be the actual, as well as titular, leader of his party in the government of the nation. He gathered about him an able and sympathetic group of assistants, and from the first assumed active command in legislation as well as in the administration of public affairs, both domestic and foreign. Because of his experience as a party leader he was at once successful in applying party tenets to the task of governing. At the outset of his administration, and for some time thereafter, the rule of Thomas Jefferson was that of the first Republican party.

He did not in his inaugural present an outline of purposes or policies. In that first official pronouncement he contented himself with presenting a series of homely maxims and pious hopes that were a reflection of his genial philosophy and his inveterate belief in the power of moral sentiment. His opponents could read dark forebodings for their own dearest interests in such phrases as "equal and exact justice to all men" and in the demand that labor should not be deprived of the bread it had earned, but neither his followers nor students of political parties have been able to discover in such generalizations the tangible party intentions of Jefferson. Much of

his first inaugural must have appealed to the non-partizan spirit of his fellow citizens; such as his call for no entangling alliances, for the honest payment of all debts, and for the freedom of religion, press and person.

How far Jefferson thought that he was from presenting a party program is best illustrated by his words, "We are all Republicans; we are all Federalists." It is obvious, that intended as a statement of the fact of an identity of partizanship it was simply not so; and had it been intended as a kindly sentiment used in persuasion it would have been too fatuous for any conceivable success. Jefferson's use of this simple statement in this first official utterance is excellent evidence of his still persisting thought that he and his party were as yet on the defensive in the United States; that is, on the defensive in existing as a party. Having in mind, as had his critics, the time of war when a division of the population had been between Whigs and Tories, and when the latter were properly considered disloyal to the governments of the several states, he pointed out that now under a common government all members of the electorate, whatever their party faith, were of one body. It may well be that he had also in mind the ease with which men passed from the support of one party to another. There were now no insuperable barriers. Indeed, his own election had been due to a slight shift in partizan strength at the polls.

But a new party was in control of the government, and they and their opponents appreciated it from the outset. James Madison and Albert Gallatin were close to the President in formation of the party program. Through the latter the President made known his wishes to his supporters in the Congress. Gallatin's house became the headquarters for the conferences that formulated the party policies. Of the products of these party caucuses, it has been written; "The President and his Secretary of the Treasury were responsible for

the main outlines, and in some cases for the details as well, of party measures. Policies were evolved, programs laid before Congress, and bills passed, all under the watchful eye of the chief executive." [1]

In such fashion did Jefferson maintain an executive leadership in the government. It was party government in much the same form as had been that accomplished by Hamilton, but it was more thorough in that the powerful leader was in this case the President, rather than a member of his cabinet. This factor raised more seriously than in the earlier instance the question of the proper relationship between executive and legislative officers of the government.

As was natural there were insurgents against this presidential rule. John Randolph, a sharp critic from the first, in 1805 formed and led a group termed "Quids," which embarrassed Jefferson and two of his successors, but a group that at no time had a considerable support in the electorate. Opposition to the federal tendencies of the administration was the usual reason given. Jefferson was reëlected in 1804 without serious opposition. Within his own immediate group, his absolute sway was unbroken until the failure of the Embargo. The events of 1808 revealed the power of the party machine which Jefferson had created and used; a power that was now sought by others as well as by those who aspired to ascend to the Presidency.

What were the party achievements of the period of Jefferson's leadership? The party brought about the repeal of the Judiciary Act of 1801. Internal taxes were abolished. The naturalization period was again placed at five years. As a party it followed Jefferson in providing an Embargo as a part of the foreign policy of the executive. It later provided a Non-Intercourse Act. A considerable portion of the party attempted to work a party will in the impeachment of Justice

[1] Harlow, *Legislative Method*, 176.

Chase. Jefferson and his immediate group credited the Louisiana purchase to the Democratic Republican party. It is, of course, true that the party long drew favor from that act, yet it is difficult to see any justification for including it in the work of the party. It was the work of the officials that happened to be then in office, and was to their credit as public officials. But the ease with which, in debating the constitutionality of the purchase, Republicans and Federalists used arguments formerly considered the exclusive possessions of the opposite party is the best evidence that the disagreement was between groups of men, and not one of fundamental belief.

Not only had a definite group of men been in charge of the national government in the years of Jefferson's presidency, but also these years brought new men into the various national offices scattered over the Union of sixteen states, although abolition of internal taxes had reduced the number of offices one half. As was natural, the bulk of these men came to have an interest in the continuance of the Republican party in office, and they composed an intangible, but important, aid to party organization.

The personnel of the administration had revealed the non-democratic character of the first Republican party.

"Jeffersonian Democracy did not imply any abandonment of the property, and particularly the landed, qualifications on the suffrage or office-holding; it did not involve any fundamental alterations in the national Constitution which the Federalists had designed as a foil to the leveling propensities of the masses; it did not propose any new devices for a more immediate and direct control of the voters over the instrumentalities of government." [2]

It was the party caucus that nominated the successor of Jefferson—although Madison was Jefferson's choice. Some

[2] Beard, *Economic Origins of Jeffersonian Democracy*, 467.

had favored James Monroe, notably Randolph, but Madison was named first by the Virginia assembly and then later in the Congressional caucus.  But the existence of a powerful executive leadership during these years, and its success in naming its successor should not blind us to the fact that party cohesion was not, as yet, the condition we now associate with that term.  For Monroe continued as a candidate to draw votes of men who had supported Jefferson and who called themselves Republicans.

In the meantime what had been the history of the party organization which had been built up by Hamilton, and which under the appellation Federalist, had lost the election of 1800?  In that defeat Hamilton saw the success of a party organization that built its success upon an appeal for popular support.  Hamilton's party had been constructed and its achievements attained by an avoidance of any such ground work.  To make an appeal similar to that of the Republicans, in Hamilton's words, was "to renounce our principles and objects."  Yet "to replete the Federal ranks," Hamilton elaborated a party plan in 1802.  The important provisions of this proposed association were as follows:

*First:* A council, consisting of a president, and twelve members, of whom four and the president to be a quorum.

*Second:* A sub-directory council in each state, consisting of a vice-president and twelve members, of whom four with the vice-president to be a quorum.

*Third:* As many societies in each state as local circumstances may permit to be formed by the sub-directory council.

Information was to be diffused through debates and correspondence.  "All careful means should be adopted to promote the election of fit men." [3]

How far from possible such a plan was for the groups that called themselves Federalists is seen in the events that led up

[3] Luetscher, *Political Machinery*. 152.

to the election of 1804. The Federalist members of Congress from New England were so convinced of their inability to wrest the national government from the hands of "aristocratic democrats of the South" as to consider a separation from the Union. Pickering was of this view, and presented a plan to the Essex junto, but it was found by them impractical at that time. Yet the first step in the plan was taken by Pickering in approaching Burr, who was then vice-president and also a candidate for the governorship of New York, and in assuring him Federalist support if, as Governor, he would take the lead in a Northern confederacy. Burr was opposed in this contest by Hamilton, and was defeated. This episode shows clearly the lack of unity among Federalist leaders. In the vote of 1804 their recognized candidates, Pinckney and King, received only fourteen electoral votes.

The prospects of the Federalists did not brighten. When the Republican group in control appeared to adopt a broad construction of the Constitution, and when after a period of years it was clear that they could govern the country, two reasons advanced in 1800 for the exclusive use of the Federalist Party no longer remained. But the great reason for a Federalist party still existed, that of providing an agency for the expression of desires by a considerable group of the established and influential members of the community.

Twenty-five or thirty men of Federalist belief, coming from eight states, met in conference in New York City in the late summer of 1808. Their great leader, Hamilton, was dead. A group from New England were most prominent, and the call for such a meeting had come from them. No publicity was given this meeting at the time; in fact it was carefully screened from view. Nothing is known of the method of selection of the men in this conference, but presumably they were party leaders in their states. No public nomination was made, although they agreed upon the support of C. C. Pinck-

ney of South Carolina and Rufus King of New York, but advised the announcement in various quarters so that it would seem the "result of General Sentiment rather than the choice of a few." "Altogether it was an assembly typical of the Federalist party." [4]

By 1808 the two party organizations, Federalist and Republican, had reached a point in development where similarities were more marked than their dissimilarities. The general approval of the Twelfth Amendment to the Constitution in 1804 had been final indication that all accepted party as the essential in presidential elections. The Federalist conference of 1808 was their acceptance of the need for a conference of leaders on the nominations. By the time of the caucus of 1808 the Republicans had accepted finally the lesson of their eight years of rule that the will of the party was to be found in such a conference.

"During this period of Republican supremacy the most noteworthy institution in Congress was not the standing committee, although its importance was steadily growing, nor yet the speakership, but the extra-constitutional party organization called the caucus. Through the caucus the jarring, discordant elements of the party were reconciled and made to work together, so that concerted policies and harmonious action were no longer the exclusive possessions of the Federalists." [5]

Madison in succeeding Jefferson in the Presidency succeeded as well to the leadership of the Republican party, but from the outset he was unable to rule within the party organization. A serious feud between two members of his own official family lamed the early efforts he made. The party members in the Congress were leaderless, in that no one other than the

[4] S. E. Morison, "The First National Nominating Convention," in *American Historical Review*, XVII, 763.
[5] Harlow, *Legislative Method*, 183-184.

President was as yet powerful enough to lead, except spasmodically. John Randolph could write in 1811, "The truth seems to be that he (Madison) is President de jure only; who exercises the office de facto I do not know. . . ." Such a view was based upon the conception of the President as a party leader. And that, Madison was not. Harlow goes so far as to conclude that "Madison could hardly have played a less important part during those eight uncomfortable years if he had remained in Virginia."[6]

Out of such a situation arose the congressional leadership which was to furnish so much of the political history of the next twenty years. In view of the great powers that had been seized upon by the extra-legal party caucus, it was only a matter of time, in view of the impotency of Madison, that a group in Congress should undertake to exercise that power. During the first five years there was little apparent headway. There were several factions and innumerable cliques. The constant supporters of the administration were little more than a Gallatin-Madison clique. The most striking development was the rise to control of the House of a new generation of members, many of whom had entered the House in 1811. Republican in name, they had little sentiment for their party in its initial position, as they lacked knowledge of the era of the Revolution. But although at once they elected one of their members, Henry Clay, as Speaker, it was not until three years later that this element was in complete control of the party organization.

Despite the failure of Madison as a party leader, he was renominated in 1812. This was the more remarkable in that he was opposed by former enemies in Virginia, by malcontents in New York and from New England, and was not satisfactory to the rising insurgents in the western states. But opponents could not, or did not, unite their forces.

[6] *Ibid*, 196.

As four years earlier, so in 1812, the Federalist leaders held a conference that was intended to be secret. But the attendance was larger than in 1808. After voting a declaration in favor of DeWitt Clinton of New York, the conference left the decision upon a formal declaration to a party committee.

Indorsed by a vote of one hundred twenty-eight to eighty-nine cast for DeWitt Clinton, Madison and his cabinet bore the burden of the war which had been declared against England in June of 1812. The great bulk of the Republicans in Congress had supported the recommendation of Madison. Monroe, who had become Secretary of State in 1811, was, according to Channing, more responsible than any one else for the declaration of war, and upon his shoulders and those of his chief rested the task of conducting it.

In four successive presidential elections, the hopes of the Federalist leaders had been dashed in overwhelming defeat at the polls. Twice they had attempted to defeat Jefferson, the second time, in 1804, failing more emphatically than before. In 1808 the privations that had followed the embargo made them eager to defeat Madison, and in 1812 the declaration of war against England had made them desperate in their knowledge that Madison could not be defeated. His reëlection and the rise to power in Congress of the new generation of leaders from southern and western states gave the added impetus to sentiments for disunion which had been uttered frequently during the first administration of Jefferson. Repeated defeat at the polls made it evident that there was no hope for their party.

The apparent failure of the administration in the conduct of the war, and the manifest disapproval of the war by a large element in New England led the Federalist leaders in Massachusetts in 1814 to take the step that ten years earlier had seemed impracticable. A call for a convention of representatives of the New England states was issued. Federalist mem-

bers of the state legislature selected the delegates from Massachusetts. Rhode Island and Connecticut responded, as did ten counties in New Hampshire, and one in Vermont. Twenty delegates met in convention at Hartford in Connecticut. The set of resolutions adopted may be considered their political platform.

It would be a mistake to consider the declarations of this party convention as the pronouncement of New England as a whole. For at least ten years the number of Republican voters in New England had nearly equaled those of the Federalists. In 1811 Republican nominees had carried Massachusetts. Throughout the period they were a well-organized body; and since they were strongest in the rural districts, and were naturally opposed to the mercantile interests, they possessed all the greater strength in combating the tendencies of the Federalists when the leaders of that party passed finally from political opposition to the administration to contemplation of a separation from the union of the states.

The cessation of hostilities with England caused the separatist movement to collapse. It left the Federalist leaders in less favorable position than before, and in the meantime the status of the administration was vastly improved. Indeed, the Republican organization was saved; and yet that organization, changed greatly in personnel, had altered also in its emphasis of principles. This fact was to be seen more in action than in words.

"The government and party thus saved had come into power by the 'revolution of 1801,' strongly emphasizing democratic principles, state rights, and strict construction of the Constitution; it emerged from the war in 1815 greatly changed if not greatly chastened, by fourteen years of experience in administration, including three years of war. Every deviation from the strict principles of 1801 had been in the direction of nationalism—the purchase of Louisiana, the embargo, the

seizure of West Florida, and the imposition of a direct tax along with the revival of excises." [7]

The party left in control of the government was a party whose action was determined by congressional caucus. Leadership was now the prerogative of a group of members of the House of Representatives. In this fashion the administration of James Madison drew to a close. The matter of a successor rested, of course, with the party caucus. Its candidate would undoubtedly be chosen President, for the opposition party, the Federalist, had by 1816, if not before, become so unimportant as a controlling force that it can accurately be classed with the group of lesser parties of which there were to be so many in American history.

When the Republican caucus met there was not agreement as to the desirability of a nomination. In the balloting, William H. Crawford of Georgia was the choice of the "young Republicans." He was defeated by Monroe. We have J. Q. Adams' testimony that by 1826 the caucus was the accepted method of accomplishing political results in all political units, large and small. Yet this machine was as yet only a machine. It had none of the political life of the group of Hamilton, or the confederates of Jefferson. It was an agency for pooling party interests, but who was master?

It was long the custom to speak of the years of the Monroe presidency as an era of good feeling. Such a view of these years arose out of various causes, chief of which, perhaps, were the disappearance of the questions of foreign policy that had divided the nation, and the fact that the great bulk of men in public life called themselves Republicans. Yet, of course, the decline in interest in the fortunes of the several European states, and the elimination of the Federalist party as a competitor for control of the national government did not in any way bring men to an agreement upon economic or constitu-

[7] K. C. Babcock, *Rise of American Nationality*, 194-195.

tional questions, and in no way changed the desire of men to obtain control of the national government for personal, sectional, or group interests. As a matter of fact, "party" was as active in these years as at any time. But it took a different form.

It is possible to distinguish more clearly than at an earlier time the difference between political history and party history. During the period 1789–1809 the political history of the United States was largely the history of the party activity, first of the Hamilton group, then later of the Jefferson adherents. Party took the initiative in the action of the government, legislative and administrative. There was a party responsibility. With the accession of Madison party guidance became uncertain and was presently lost. Party history for twenty years thereafter becomes an account of struggle of factions and cliques and leaders, only occasionally revealing distinct party action in governmental affairs. Political history in these years is largely the history of accommodation, compromise and accident.

It is in the midst of this period of party chaos that one of the questions which eventually was to reveal most effectively the weakness of American party practice rose to a conspicuous place in political history. This was the question of the extension of the institution of slavery, raised at the time of the admission of Missouri. Slavery had not been a party issue between the Federalist and Republican groups, nor was it a party issue, as envisaged by any one of the groups existent in public life in 1820. Yet it appeared as an issue to be considered by men in office, and was met by these officials and disposed of as a political question. It need have no important place in party history. When the time should come that a party should take up a position upon slavery as an institution or upon its extension, or upon the treatment of slaves, then party history must include this moral issue. But before the organization of agitation, and prior to the time that a group of propagandists

made slavery their one party issue, the period of uncertainty had passed. Instead of several groups of leaders dividing the responsibility of government, the United States had entered a period of more rigid party responsibility than had yet been known.

The Era of Good Feeling opened with a decided impetus to nationalism everywhere evident. Had a national party been in office, unquestionably its purpose and motive would have been to build up the national power. The establishment of the second United States Bank was an indication of the tendency. The bank bill and passage of a tariff bill providing for protection and the congressional call for internal improvements indicate the general character of the forces in the majority. But the lack of a party organization, subject to efficient and acknowledged leadership, left the matter of legislation and administration to individuals and small groups. The rivalry of individuals, and the lack of party responsibility gave greater scope to sectional rivalries which comprise so much of the political history of these years.

It is the personal rivalries, rather than the sectional issues, which chiefly interest the student of party history at this point. The views of sections, their votes, and their economic needs have their place in political history. The tariff vote of 1824 revealed a sectional division, but it was not a party division. Sections did not naturally form the bases of parties, even though they sometimes responded repeatedly to a party leadership.[8] Personal rivalries within the accepted Republi-

[8] In studies of the vote of the electorate, and its relation to geographic bases, we appear to have the reactions of public opinion to the programs of "parties." But it does not necessarily follow that in these distributions of vote, we have reflected the *party character* of the electorate. If the party platform or candidate represented a definite economic, social or political segment, and nothing else, it might be so. But the platform and its candidate represent, first of all, the party organization. Popular votes are responses of public opinion, but not necessarily indications of party "character."

can party were the significant factors in the situation at this time. Within the cabinet of Monroe were four men of potentiality as party leaders; John Quincy Adams, William H. Crawford, William Wirt, and John C. Calhoun. Henry Clay was speaker of the House and master of the House machine.

It has been seen that in the party history, 1789–1829, "party" meant a group of leaders. As long as this was true, the rivalries of the period of Monroe were natural. It was inevitable, in view of the importance of the presidency, that the rivalries should clash upon choice for that position. But there were developments that pointed to a different conception of party, which indicated that the ease with which leaders had accomplished their ends within the party was no longer to continue. "Party" in the use made of it by both Republican and Federalist leaders, had been built upon a restricted electorate and upon a general lack of interest except in times of crisis. There had been a gradual widening of the constituency concerned with nominations, but as yet no agency for an expression of the popular will.

The electorate was increasing in size. Since 1800 twelve states had entered the Union. Between 1816–1830 ten states either established new constitutions or made over old ones. Indicative of the change was the submission of the Connecticut constitution to a vote of the electorate. After 1817 no incoming state had either property or taxpaying qualification upon the right of suffrage. Massachusetts gave up its property qualification in 1821.

"With the exception of Mississippi, where the voter was obliged either to be a taxpayer or a member of the militia, all the western states entered the Union with manhood suffrage, and all of them, in contrast with the South, from which their settlers had chiefly been drawn, provided that apportionment of the legislature should be based upon the white population, thus accepting the doctrine of the rule of the majority

rather than that of property." [9] All this led to a need for greater organization, in nomination and in election.

How important the caucus had become to the leaders has been shown in reference to matters of legislation and governmental policy. Suggestion has been made also of its use in presidential nominations. "Throughout this period (1804–1824) the party candidates for presidential electors in the different states were all nominated by a joint caucus of the party members of the legislature." But after all the original designation of the candidate by a congressional caucus or by a meeting of leaders at a central point was the matter of greatest importance. It was at this point that now the demand arose that the voters should have a part. Not only was it desired that a broader base be supplied, but that the selections should be made by those not holding office. In these two important respects, it was more democratic.

A party agency of this kind was unknown to the "parties" that had come into being since the adoption of the Constitution. Indeed it was a different conception; similar, indeed, to the Jacobin clubs and, before them, to the Committees of Correspondence of the Revolution, but in 1824 of vastly greater importance than at the earlier time, for now there was an acknowledgement of a wider franchise, and a general admission by all leaders that the rule of the voters should be accepted. This general acceptance is the explanation of the ease with which the "party of leaders" now gave place temporarily to a "party of voters." There were rumblings in 1821 and 1822, and in 1823 the denunciation of the congressional caucus was a great blow at party regularity. Attention was directed upon a "new, extraordinary, self-created, central power, stronger than the power of the Constitution, which has risen up at the seat of government; a power which has assumed the direction and control of the fundamental pro-

[9] F. J. Turner, *The Rise of the New West*, 175.

visions of the Constitution, relative to the election of the President." [10]

Because of these developments, the meeting of the congressional caucus in 1824 to nominate a candidate to succeed Monroe was a failure in that only a fourth of the Republican members attended. It made its nomination, nevertheless, and in the appeal for support, it gave the clue to the importance attached to this kind of caucus by those who for nearly a quarter of a century, some of them for even longer, had looked upon party as a "group of leaders in office or seeking office"—for they admitted that the disappearance of the caucus was a question "touching the dismemberment and preservation of the party."

But the new view was expressed in more than an absence from caucus. It carried with it the possibility of nominations by legislatures, or by groups of private citizens. The increase in voting population, and the increase in the interest of voters enlarged the opportunity to present programs and platforms which might appeal more widely than those presented by leaders who happened to be in office, or to have had earlier experience in office. Machinery for the organization and direction of popular interest was the present need. Records in office and promises of performance were at best only parts of such a presentation.

As has been pointed out the lack of an acknowledged leader within the party that was in power in the years 1809–1829, gave free rein to the rivalries of the men who occupied public office. About each of a half dozen men gathered a coterie of followers, and in the course of the years in office each came to be identified with a group of policies, and some with a program of principles. Clay, for example, had, during the course of his long leadership of the House, created a following and fashioned a set of political policies reflective of the senti-

[10] Cited by C. S. Thompson, *Rise and Fall of the Congressional Caucus*, 43.

ment of a considerable section of the electorate throughout the Union.

The men who exercised, or aspired to exercise, leadership agreed in large measure upon the general outlines of what was termed "Republican policies." They disagreed chiefly upon the way in which laws or proposed bills affected their several constituencies. Their important disagreement, however, was personal. It was a matter of leadership, not a matter of political issues or even of such a division in the governing class as had been exemplified in the division between Hamilton and Jefferson. All the potential leaders in 1824, save possibly one, were representative of an America which had come into existence since the establishment of the government under the Constitution. The party question was simply, who should lead? If ever a party organization was needed by a self-governing people, it was in 1824, when the rivalries for leadership had reached a point where only an organization and direction of public opinion could bring a clear cut result at the polls. The most considerable organization based upon the interest of the voter was that undertaken on behalf of the one candidate removed at the time from official life in Washington,—Andrew Jackson. Of course combinations of leaders worked in his interest, but it was the popular appeal that explained the size of his plurality vote in this election. But this organization on his behalf had not been quite powerful enough. The electoral votes were so divided as to place the decision in the House of Representatives. The House chose J. Q. Adams. Adams was the least "party-minded" of all the aspirants, and he accomplished nothing during his administration to bring order out of party chaos. Adams' conception of his place was not that of Jefferson, yet his personal force and statesman's vision prevented him from playing the rôle of his two predecessors. Had he had a party, he would have led it. He had little ability to create one.

The United States which was the scene of the second campaign of Andrew Jackson for the Presidency, a campaign that was carried on throughout the administration of his predecessor, was not the United States that had existed at the opening of the century. Physically speaking, the image of the United States in 1825 hardly suggested that of 1800. The purchase of Louisiana had more than doubled the original area and had swept the boundaries to the Rockies. A population of five and one third millions in 1800 approached twelve millions twenty-five years later.

It need hardly be said that political interests and ideas of party were not the same throughout the states of this vast area. As long as transportation remained difficult and uncertain, and means of communication slow and expensive, sectional and provincial interests would be more apparent than a national interest, even in matters effecting the national government.

Under the Constitution each of the twenty-four states had two Senators who came to Washington to express the views dominant in their section of the United States. In the House of Representatives, the preponderance of voting power went to the areas that were most plentiful in population. This gave great power to what was termed "the East," and promised ever increasing influence to what was termed "the West." There was no representative of the nation as a whole, unless it was the President. And a President to rule must have more than an initial popular support; he must have an organized agency in the Congress. Adams' experience showed this to be true. A national party was the need.

## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

The general reader will consult Henry Adams, *History of the United States* (1889–1891); Edward Channing, *History of the United States*, IV, V (1917, 1921); F. J. Turner, *Rise of the New West*

(1906); K. C. Babcock, *Rise of American Nationality* (1906); Allen Johnson, *Jefferson and his Colleagues* (1921).

Parts of the following brief accounts will interest: Allen Johnson, *Union and Democracy* (1915); Max Farrand, *Development of the United States* (1918).

Special studies include: H. C. Hockett, *Western Influences on Political Parties to 1825* (1917); F. W. Dallinger, *Nominations for Elective Office in the United States* (1897); C. S. Thompson, *An Essay on the Rise and Fall of the Congressional Caucus as a Machine for Nominating Candidates for the Presidency* (1902); R. V. Harlow, *History of Legislative Method in the Period before 1825* (1917); C. A. Beard, *Economic Origins of Jeffersonian Democracy* (1915); G. D. Luetscher, *Early Political Machinery in the United States* (1903); W. A. Robinson, *Jeffersonian Democracy in New England* (1916).

"Popular government, or any other for that matter, is no chronometer, with delicate apparatus of springs, wheels, balances, and escapements.  It is a rough, heavy bulk of machinery, that we must get to work as best we can.  It goes by rude force and weight of needs, greedy interests and stubborn prejudice; it cannot be adjusted in an instant, or it may be a generation, to spin and weave new material into a well-finished cloth."

JOHN MORLEY, *Notes on Politics and History*, 196–197.

# CHAPTER VI

## AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

The United States in 1830—Distribution of population—Communication and national life—Democratic bases—New types of party organization—Candidacy of Andrew Jackson—Appearance of parties in the Congress—Creation of a Jackson party—Elements of opposition—Strength of party organization—The Democratic party.

THE United States in 1830 comprised 1,793,400 square miles of territory, more than one half of this being east of the Mississippi River. Although for more than a quarter of a century a considerable portion of the trans-Mississippi area had been admittedly the property of the United States, the boundaries of the American claims were still in dispute in 1830. In all the area claimed by the United States west of the Mississippi the census of 1830 reported less than 400,000 persons. The states of Louisiana and Missouri were the only exceptions to the territorial status of this region. East of the Mississippi River were twenty-two states, and the territory included in the later states of Michigan and Wisconsin. In all the United States there were between twelve and thirteen million persons. Three fourths of them were east of the Appalachian Mountains.

Except for certain areas in Kentucky, Tennessee and Ohio, the area west of the Appalachians was sparsely populated. Fully half of the territory within the states of Mississippi, Indiana and Illinois was still in Indian possession. Tennessee, which had been a state for a generation, and one of whose citizens was now President, had a population of only 681,904. Kentucky, four years older as a state than Tennessee, and which furnished in the person of Henry Clay the second most

powerful leader of the period, had 687,917 persons. Less than four million persons lived west of the Appalachians.

These westerners were men of frontier experience and democratic persuasion. With them should be placed those who occupied the uplands of the South, the western areas of Pennsylvania and New York, and the more recently occupied areas in the northern New England states. The bulk of the population throughout the Union was rural in experience and outlook. There were, however, twenty-six cities of more than 8,000 persons. New York was the largest city.

The rate of increase of population mirrored best of all the vitality of the national life in 1830. In the twenty years between the admission of Missouri and the spectacular presidential campaign of 1840, the population of the nation nearly doubled, and the region west of the mountains increased four times.[1] In a nation with a western frontier more than three thousand miles in length, and in which the westernmost city, St. Louis, was nearly a thousand miles from New York, the occupation by one people involved serious problems of transportation and communication. Newspapers were relatively few and with the exception of such papers as the *Globe* and *Telegraph*, they circulated within narrow limits. There were no railways.

In such a situation national thought was slow in formation and it was difficult to make accurate estimate of national convictions. Except for the common government at Washington, physical bonds of national interest were slender. There was, of course, the common memory of the nation in its foundation, but by 1830 the men who had participated in that work had passed from active life.

For the citizens of all the states, but particularly of the states that had entered the Union since the opening of the

[1] Map showing the advance of population by giving the successive frontier lines in C. R. Fish, *The Development of American Nationality*, 438.

century, thirty years before, the symbol of national authority was the Presidency. The House of Representatives had come to exercise great power, but few of the members were known outside their sections. The Senate was an arena to which states sent their champions. Their contests were widely discussed, yet but few came to be generally known, and then usually and significantly in connection with a prospective elevation to the Presidency.

It was amply evident that the more rapid growth in western states, the greater place given the common man and the decided interest taken by him in politics would affect fundamental changes in political method. The increased size of the vote demanded additional means for its direction, at the same time that the cause of its increase weakened the hold of former leaders in political control. A democratic electorate saw little need of the guidance of a chosen few, and prepared to force its support upon an individual or individuals chosen from its own body.

A change in party was now inevitable. As the democratic principle of participation in government came to be admitted, and its means formulated in law, there followed of necessity the desire for a more general participation in the agency that gave life to government, that is in party. But in achieving this end, the way was not simple. It required the extension of the prevailing political methods.

Party organization had responded to the changes, first of all in certain of the older states, noticeably in New York and Pennsylvania. Given an increased electorate and an emphasis upon the rule of the people, there appeared groups of men engaged in organizing the vote for the purpose of carrying elections. These men were not in public office, and their chief business was not the formulation of public policy. "A great mass of voters unable of themselves to act in concert or with intelligent and independent judgment, might by careful man-

agement and a watchful sagacity be organized in the interest of those who wished to control the offices and policy of the State." [2]

With the rise to power of the party machines, functioning outside the government of the states or of the nation, there disappeared finally any possibility of untrammeled decision by the electorate upon the proposals or actions of men in office or running for office. The picture of several hundred thousand voters going to the polls on election day and each voter casting a vote (free and independent) had no real foundation.

As has been said, Andrew Jackson was placed in nomination for the Presidency by the legislature of Tennessee. The nomination carried with it the semblance of official designation; men in office, albeit state office, were used as the agency to present the name to the voters. This was, of course, a cover for the actual group interested, a group of ardent admirers of Jackson, who as private citizens had no effective way of presenting his name but who nevertheless formed the political organization that actually introduced him into the presidential contest. Of these, W. B. Lewis and Amos Kendall were by general consent the most influential, as they were the ablest.

Put forward by this group, Jackson was widely heralded as a representative of the people who would in the event of election introduce needed democratic reforms. Presentation by an organization outside of the national government seemed more democratic than designation by congressional caucus. Groups of politicians in New York, Pennsylvania and South Carolina were active in his behalf. There was ample evidence of the organization of the vote, yet over and above it all rose the natural appeal that this frontier hero made in his own person and career to the body of democratically inclined voters who went to the polls in 1828.

[2] Woodrow Wilson, *Division and Reunion*, 33.

There was a great increase in the popular vote cast. J. Q. Adams, again the opponent of Jackson, shared in this increase. But Jackson had a decided majority of the popular vote and of the electoral vote. On the basis of state votes, it was accomplished by carrying the South, three states of the Northwest, Pennsylvania and New York. The victory in the last named states has been termed a "victory of organized politics" and has led to much of the emphatic comment on the result. The support of Calhoun, who was elected Vice-President, undoubtedly explains a large share of support in the seaboard South.

Prior to the inauguration of Jackson it was apparent that a new generation was coming to its days of power. Jackson, who was now past sixty, had been thirty-three at the time of Jefferson's inauguration. Men born during Jefferson's administration were now old enough to vote. Democracy was the cry of those who came to power in Washington in 1829.

In the course of the campaign of 1828 the division of candidates and of electorate had been between "Jackson men" and "Adams men." A party of "Jackson men" was now in control of the government. True to the practice of many in the states, and in keeping with the theory of democratic participation in government, the Jackson men took possession of the offices. Martin Van Buren of New York became Secretary of State. Within the cabinet were friends of Calhoun, the Vice-President. Prior to the meeting of the Congress a group of Jackson's adherents had come to Washington and remained to act as the nucleus of the President's personal party.[3]

But even among those close to the President there was serious disagreement upon measures and policies. The party had yet to be organized on a national scale. Once in the position of initiative, this administration faced the problem of leadership, as had its predecessors. Would there be a personal

[3] *Cf.* J. S. Bassett, *Life of Andrew Jackson,* II, 408.

leadership, a cabinet leadership, a rise to power of a new group in Congress, or did the manner of election foreshadow the development of an unofficial leadership?

In line with the great division on the Presidency in 1828, the members of the Congress elected in that year continued to be designated as Jackson men and Adams men, and the former comprised a decided majority in the new Congress which convened in December of 1829. But this was merely an indication of personal preference, and in no way revealed the existence of a party with a platform or with a program. The creation of such congressional parties waited upon a leadership that should be revealed.

As has been seen in the twenty years that lay between the retirement of Jefferson and the inauguration of Jackson the occupants of the Presidency had not been party leaders. Neither the gentle Madison nor the suave Monroe commanded or aspired to command as Jefferson had done. The second Adams had declined to lead a personal party, and would in all probability have failed, had he made the effort to do so. Moreover, with the gradual disappearance of the Federalist party leaders, the electorate ceased to divide upon party lines at the time of elections. Political party lines had ceased to exist in Congress, being displaced by factional divisions growing out of the rivalries of the several leaders.

"Jackson men" organized both House and Senate in December of 1829. The President in his message gave them no party program, although there were passages that later were pointed out as indicative of the underlying tendencies of the party in power. But whereas the President could delay the pronouncement of a policy, he did not and could not postpone assertion of his personal leadership in office. In the course of the five months of this session he submitted appointments upon which he secured the action of the Senate, and in this process there was revealed the extent of his control. Upon other mat-

ters of patronage in the House the lines were drawn, and by the close of the session the personal party had been welded.

This process revealed, as well, the personnel of the opposition, but it was a membership held together, chiefly, by their common opposition to the political leadership of the President. The lack of definitive party organization at the beginning of this period explained the lack of initiative action upon the various problems that pressed for a solution. The basic reason was revealed in the break-up of the personal party lines, wherever issues were presented in the votes upon measures in the Congress. Upon every major question that reached a vote in this Congress both Jackson and opposition adherents were divided.

Against such a background the Hayne-Webster debate attracted unusual attention. Hayne of South Carolina was a supporter of the President, although not of the group close to him. Webster of Massachusetts was, of course, in the opposition. Their expressions of principle, as well as of policy, laid ample ground for the building of parties upon constitutional bases, or upon economic interests, but parties did not result therefrom. In the course of that debate seventeen members of the Senate participated, but it was as true at the close of the session, as at the beginning, that such discussions merely strengthened the hold of the personal party upon the government. "A party of principle ' could not hope to control.

The refusal of President Jackson to identify his cause with the view of the Constitution or of the tariff expressed by Hayne gave additional power to his group of personal adherents. They were strengthened still more by the personal breach between Calhoun and Jackson, which led presently to the withdrawal of the Calhoun adherents from his official family and left the President surrounded by men in sympathy with personal rule. This development also gave Jackson increased faith in his own will.

All this was made more emphatic by the action of South Carolina and the response of Jackson. Defeated in their attempt to determine the course of the Jackson administration, Hayne and Calhoun sought to organize a party of opposition. Seeking to accomplish their purposes, not through the use of the vote and a later control of the national government, but through the threatened action of one of the states and its expected effect upon the action of the national government, they gave Jackson the opportunity to proclaim the supremacy of the Union, and to strengthen his hold upon a large body of the voters. Though the blow was weakened by the passage of the Compromise Tariff of 1833, the Proclamation of Jackson was sufficient to indicate the supremacy of the President in the government. It gave a greater patriotic flavor to the Jackson policies thereafter.

Meanwhile, in the Congress an administration program had emerged, only partially developed though it was. The President had by two vetoes struck back at the political measures of Clay, and by so doing had identified his cause with that of opposition to the United States Bank and to the expenditure of national revenue upon internal improvements. True there were "Jackson men" who left him on these issues, but by the election of 1832 there existed a Jackson platform, at least an earnest of his action, if reëlected. Of course the issue was clouded by uncertainty on the tariff, and by the misrepresentation of his opponents. The campaign of 1832 revealed the extent to which the Jackson party had developed. A national convention expressed the popular will, and the most significant act was the selection of Van Buren as a candidate for Vice-President. This choice stressed the personal bond of support of the President in his struggle against his opponents in the Senate. The President's party, well termed "Democratic," having lost the support of Calhoun and a considerable section of the southern leaders, and

having identified itself with anti-monopoly movements, without making clear its attitude to the tariff, went to the voters of the country for indorsement. The party was well organized throughout the Union.

During the first two years of Jackson's presidency, Clay had not been in public life, but from a retirement in Kentucky watched for the development of signs of effective opposition to the rule of Jackson. When he reëntered the Senate in December of 1831 it was at once apparent that most of the elements of opposition would rally about him both in Congress and among the voters in the election of 1832. He was placed in nomination by a national convention. But neither in definitive organization nor in precise platform was there important advance from his candidacy of 1824.

Party organization had come to be the most important element in political life. In 1831 the advocates of a single and special proposal held a national convention, nominated candidates and attempted to catch the national attention. The appearance of this anti-Masonic movement, revealed the fact that a popular vote when backed by party organization might force issues to a hearing and might threaten the governing parties into compliance. With no primary interest in the problems of the national government, a special group of men, taking jointly a peculiar view of one matter, could combine, seek the suffrage, and perhaps obtain control of the government. [4]

This anti-Masonic party, as the Liberty party soon to appear, was not only a special interest group; it was a new kind of a party in the United States. But of course so too the Jackson group was a new kind of a party, for the inner organization of the Jackson party was a coterie devoting itself wholeheartedly and exclusively to the control of politics in the interests of the organization. Neither to them, nor to the anti-Masons,

[4] Charles McCarthy, *The Anti-Masonic Party.*

was a program of public policy the important reason for existence. It was left to the National Republican nominee in 1832 to exemplify the older view. Clay was identified definitely with certain views of public policy. He asked the voters to give him the mandate to lead. And the conservative elements applauded the older view.[5]

The electorate indorsed the candidacy of Jackson, and by that act not only gave the party organization extended lease of power, but strengthened the purpose of Jackson to push to a conclusion his war upon the "money power." This concentration of interest caused certain supporters to draw away and increased the vigor and pointed the purpose of those in opposition. Both of these developments strengthened the party organization of Jackson. It gave the leaders more unhindered guidance of the party strategy, and served to divert the attention of the country from the issues that divided the electorate into many groups. The most important matter was political power, and its exercise.

Against the President's policy, dramatically presented in the removal of the government deposits from the United States Bank, the opposition raged in vain. At no time in the second administration was a group in Congress able to override the President's will upon a matter of major importance, and although year by year more men dropped away from the guidance of the party organization, the President's supporters were able in the end to secure a remarkable vote of indorsement in the Senate, and to control the patronage in the House. Calhoun remained in ineffectual opposition.

In 1836 the Democratic organization presented Van Buren to the voters as a successor of Jackson in the Presidency. Always a member of the inner group which comprised the party organization, Van Buren was identified with the party, as he was also with Jackson, because of his ardent support of the

[5] Cf. S. R. Gammon, *The Presidential Campaign of 1832.*

President. The Democrats asked indorsement of their rule, giving little evidence of their exact purposes in the future.

Opposing Van Buren were Daniel Webster, William H. Harrison and Hugh White, each nominated by legislatures in the fashion of 1824. Each was identified with certain tendencies in politics. Webster most of all presented the extreme opposition to Jackson. None of them had a vigorous or extensive party organization. In the event of the election of any one of them, presumably the Jackson adherents would leave office, but who would take control and what policies would be advanced, it was impossible to say. The people were asked to choose a President; let party government develop as an afterthought.

The voters chose Van Buren. In the Congress that assembled in special session in 1837 a majority favorable to Democratic rule elected J. K. Polk Speaker of the House. Van Buren made the establishment of the Independent Treasury his definite program, and despite the division among his supporters, and the loss of party control of the Congress, he finally pressed it to an enactment in 1840. The Democratic party leaders were divided on the issue, notably in New York, yet at the end the organization was able to renominate Van Buren and to ask a third indorsement of its rule.

## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

General reading in Edward Channing, *History of the United States*, V (1921); J. S. Bassett, *Life of Andrew Jackson*, II (1911); James Schouler, *History of the United States*, III, IV (1894); William McDonald, *Jacksonian Democracy* (1906); C. S. Bowers, *Party Battles of the Jackson Period* (1922).

Portions of shorter general accounts: Allen Johnson, *Union and Democracy* (1915); W. E. Dodd, *Expansion and Conflict* (1915); Woodrow Wilson, *Division and Reunion* (1893).

Special studies include: Charles McCarthy, *The Anti-Masonic*

"Party is as old as politics and the operation of party in working the machinery of government is seen in all countries having free institutions; but of party as an external authority, expressing its determinations through its own peculiar organs, the United States as yet offers to the world the only distinct example. . . ."

H. J. FORD, *The Rise and Growth of American Politics*, 294.

# CHAPTER VII

## WAR OF PARTY ORGANIZATIONS

Organization of the elements of opposition—The Whig coalition victory of
1840—Break-up of the coalition—Struggle within the Democratic party—
The issue in 1844—Strength of party in 1845—Growth in political dissent—
Expansion of the United States—Acceptance of party alignment in 1848.

It was evident that success in national politics called for
organization on a national scale. As there had been no na-
tional convention of the opponents of Jackson in 1836, there
was no official organization to call a meeting for nomination
of an opposing candidate in the election of 1840. Suggestions
as to time and place were made in various ways. Finally in
May of 1838 "opposition members of Congress without dis-
tinction of party" met and called a convention to assemble
at Harrisburg in December of the following year. It was sug-
gested that each delegation be equal to the representation of
its state in Congress.

As was natural in a party of opposition, second only to the
general agreement upon need of overcoming the prevailing
administration was the general interest in selecting a candi-
date who should gather in all of the votes of those in opposi-
tion. Prior to the meeting of the convention the matter was
discussed vigorously, and at times hotly enough to threaten
disaster. It was everywhere recognized that any possible
success necessitated agreement of very divergent elements.
In the course of a year and a half of discussion, segments of
the electorate gave evidences of preference for candidates,
and for the use of various designations of party. W. H. Harri-
son, Winfield Scott, Daniel Webster and Henry Clay were
given indorsements, and in addition to the term "Whig,"

the terms "Democratic Republican," "Democratic-anti-Masonic," "Anti-Van Buren" were used by groups of those who expected to have a part in the overthrow of the Democrats. Their opponents termed them "Federalists" as well.

Without question Clay was the most prominent opponent of the administration. He had led in the Senate against the measures of Van Buren, as he had earlier led against Jackson. He was a popular idol, and had a vote been taken of the opposition candidates who were being considered, he would have led all the rest, although that he would have had a majority is extremely doubtful. There were enmities contracted in the course of his already long career, and elements in the opposition which were unalterably opposed to measures associated with Clay's leadership. It was clear by 1839 that there must be an unusual degree of harmony if there was to be a possible success against the Democracy, even though desertions from the leadership of Van Buren had made it doubtful whether the Democratic, party organization would secure from the electorate as large a support as in 1836.

Among the groups of men interested in public affairs, and who were desirous of making felt their opposition to the Democratic control in the nation, was a group in the state of New York, led by Thurlow Weed. They had successfully contended against the "Albany Regency," and had attracted to their support a considerable element of the dissatisfied; those who had supported the anti-Masonic movement, others who had become greatly interested in the question of the slave power, although not sufficiently to carry them into the abolitionist movement. The success of this group of leaders in New York had been that of an opposition party. If Van Buren, an old political enemy of theirs in the State of New York, was to be overthrown, it was to be by uniting all of the elements of opposition.[1]

[1] Cf. T. W. Barnes, *Memoir of Thurlow Weed.*

Weed did not believe that this could be done under the leadership of Clay. He so informed Clay, and made his plans to control the forthcoming national convention. Clay in his turn was active in the preliminary canvass. He made effort to coöperate with Democrats, who had opposed the administration, and he did obtain the support of such a powerful leader as Hugh White, who had been a candidate in 1836. He stressed the obvious fact that he was preferred by the rank and file of that portion of the electorate that had supported him in 1832.

Harrison, although for the most part content to leave his cause in the hands of those who repeatedly indorsed him, as they had in 1836, stressed the need of conciliation and pointed out the reasons for his belief that Clay could not carry the Northwest, and that he himself could. Scott was looked upon as the cat's-paw of Webster's friends. It developed that he was the candidate of the New York group, who were determined to prevent Clay from receiving the nomination of the Harrisburg convention.

What was termed the "Whig National Convention" met in Harrisburg on December 4, 1839, and adopted an elaborate plan of organization. There were 254 delegates from twenty-two states, South Carolina, Arkansas, Georgia and Tennessee not being represented. Attempts were made to modify the plan of organization, but they failed, and on the first ballot the result gave 103 for Clay, 91 for Harrison and 57 for Scott, a majority in each state delegation determining the vote of that state. On a second ballot Clay lost slightly, and Scott gained. On a final ballot, the bulk of the Scott support, that is, the New York vote, went to Harrison, and he was nominated. It was, of course, the vote of New York that made Harrison the nominee, and Weed more than any other was responsible. All of the states that remained for Clay on the final ballot were slave states.

John Tyler of Virginia had expressed his preference for Clay over Van Buren, and prior to the meeting of the convention enumerated what he considered Whig principles. Thus openly aligning himself with the opposition then in process of amalgamation, he corresponded with Clay, and came to the Harrisburg convention as a delegate favoring Clay's nomination. Despite a letter of Clay read in convention after the nomination of Harrison, and despite the general acceptance of the decision, the sentiment in the convention on the question of the Vice-Presidency proved difficult to direct. Six or more names were considered in committee but finally after the refusal of Talmadge of New York to be considered, Tyler was chosen. A few days later he said in Washington "I am a true and genuine Whig, and in the Capitol yonder I have shown my love of Whig principles."

Harrison's own view of his position as nominee was expressed in a letter written by him a few months later:

"My majority in Ohio and Indiana in 1836 would have been larger but there was little confidence in my success, and as most of the pioneers and old soldiers had been Jackson men they adhered to their party because they would not go over to Whigs and they supposed there was no chance of forming a new one with me at their head. It is now generally thought that I shall succeed and as far as I can learn nineteen twentieths of that class have declared themselves in my favor. We have also many recruits in our ranks from the paupers of the times. Most of them, however, will not be Whigs, but vote for me as they say on the same grounds as they supported General Jackson." [2]

The convention adopted no platform. Thus the party managers who had made the nominations asked of the electorate that a mandate be given their nominees to administer the affairs of the government. None of these party managers

[2] Talmadge Papers in Wisconsin Historical Society Library.

were as yet of national reputation. Harrison's views were sought and presented. Clay entered the campaign and enumerated a series of general propositions. The attention of the electorate was kept upon the weaknesses of the party in power. Such a method bound together men of very diverse views of public policy, and the elements that gathered about these men voted to take party power from Van Buren. Who would then secure it, was left open to question.

The Democratic convention was held in Baltimore on May 5, 1840. Of course Van Buren was the nominee. No candidate for the Vice-Presidency was presented. To have selected any one of the various men that had been suggested by various agencies of party opinion would have been to risk division of the party vote on the Presidency. But it indicated in graphic way how unimportant such a nomination seemed at that time. All of the hopes of the party organization were centered in the person of Van Buren, one of their own number. The platform was a curious one for a party in power; for the most part it indicated its opposition to measures, or its fear of proposals. It did indorse the Independent Treasury, and it called Harrison a Federalist.

As it is well-known, there was great popular interest aroused in the course of this presidential campaign. The country was as yet primarily rural in outlook, and a majority of the people lived or had at some time lived in log houses. This fact helps to explain to later generations the popularity of the log cabin as one of the symbols of the Harrison candidacy. Harrison was indeed a man of the people in quite the way that Jackson had been at the time of his first candidacy for the Presidency sixteen years earlier. But as in the case of the Tennessean, so in the case of the Ohioan, there were not sufficient votes among the masses of the pioneer areas to win success, except by coöperation with certain political forces in the eastern states. The time had not yet come when the

leaders from the western states could dominate through sheer numbers a great national party organization.

The size of the vote cast in 1840 was a revelation to contemporaries, just as the outcome, when it was apparent, seemed to them to indicate a revolution in politics. The vigor and enthusiasm of the political workers explained in the large measure the increase in the vote over that cast in 1836. It was noteworthy, however, that the increase in the vote for Van Buren was almost as large as the increase of Harrison's vote over that of the total cast for opponents of Van Buren in 1836. It was apparently an enthusiasm that affected the Democrats as well as the Whigs. Moreover the favorable majorities were in most states small, and the nation, over the Harrison lead, was less than 150,000. The total vote increased about a million, indication enough of an aroused electorate, but the total vote of two and one half millions was representative of a total white population of about fourteen millions. Inasmuch as the limitations upon the white male suffrage were by this time practically all removed, it is apparent that interest in politics was not so overwhelming as it was subsequently to become. This vote was cast within less than half the total area of the United States, the balance being unsettled.

When at the end of a month of balloting in the different states it was known that two hundred thirty-four electoral votes would be cast for Harrison and sixty for Van Buren, it was known as well that votes had been cast in seven states for James G. Birney, and that his votes represented seven thousand persons who wished to express their desire for the abolition of slavery. That these were but a small proportion of those of like view was known to all. It was the appearance of these political abolitionists in the political arena, not their number, that was to the party leader an ill omen.

Thus in its third national contest the Democratic party organization was beaten by use of a weapon taken from its

own armory. An organization of lesser political chieftains had effected a coalition that had held together in support of the nominee of a so-called party convention at Harrisburg. Its leaders were seeking this power for their own uses. The voters gave a majority to Harrison, and thus granted to this organization, and to Clay, the opportunity to rule.

Those whose political affiliations entitled them to share in the fruits of victory instantly appreciated that the outcome of the inevitable struggle for power within the coalition would determine the personnel of the group that would rule the country in the course of this administration. That the President-elect would be swayed by his advisors was the general view, and all doubtless felt as one of them did when he wrote that "some one I know should be near the President." Harrison felt it his duty to consult with Webster and Clay, as he did with a number of Democrats who had opposed Van Buren. This he did in the process of forming his cabinet and in preparing for the disposal of the spoils of office. As for a party program, and for an exercise of party leadership, we find Harrison in 1841, like his predecessors in leadership at a time of a party overturn, like Jefferson in 1801 and Jackson in 1829, postponing action. But unlike either of them he did not have opportunity to formulate a plan or to proceed upon it.

Tyler came to power unexpectedly. He was not in Washington when Harrison died, but hastened there from his home in Virginia. Had Harrison been the actual leader of the party come to power, or had he, like Jackson, seemed to have the potentiality of leadership, the change would have seemed even more abrupt. As it was, the Whig party leaders had now to deal with an executive who was not only not a member of the party organization, but one who for many years had fought in politics most of the measures that interested them most. In their impending conflict with Tyler, they were dealing with a man who knew national, as well as Virginia, politics,

and not a man, like Harrison, who had had no political experience, and who in his brief exercise of power had given ample evidence of his willingness to act in the tradition of Washington, rather than of Jefferson or Jackson.

The election of 1840 had resulted in bringing into Congress majorities in opposition to the outgoing administration, and it was the prevalent custom to consider these as subject to the guidance of the Whig leadership, when it should be revealed. As was to be expected, Clay assumed the active leadership of these forces. Three days after taking the oath of office, Tyler issued an address to the people, but there appeared no indication that he was not in sympathy with the purposes of those who united to overthrow Van Buren. But what were these purposes?

Tyler was known as a man of decided principles. In this he was unlike most of the leading men of his generation, and this had put him in a conspicuous position on a number of occasions prior to his Presidency.[3] A man with the record of such decided views would never have been selected as a candidate for the Presidency. But he was President and the outstanding party leader with whom he must presumably work in harmony was Henry Clay, whom he had known for twenty years, and with whom he had seldom agreed on matters of public policy.

That Clay should present in the Congress a program for party action could not have been unexpected. Clay had long been recognized as the outstanding national critic of those measures which had been associated with the leaders who had been repudiated by the voters. Because of that vote, which had also brought into Congress a majority bound together, if at all, by their mutual opposition to the Democrats, Clay had of necessity to attempt to force or to win those elements

[3] For a partisan view definitely stated, see L. G. Tyler, *Letters and Times of the Tylers.*

into a common organization, and with it to enact legislation desired by those elements of the electorate which had long looked upon him as their leader in politics. In a word, for the first time in nearly two decades the Federalist-National Republican-Whig element had a chance to exercise power in Washington.

Early in June of 1841 Clay presented a series of resolutions, embodying proposals for the repeal of the subtreasury law, for the incorporation of a national bank, for the imposition of additional tariff duties, and for the distribution of the proceeds of the sale of public lands. Here was a program for action, "a belated announcement of the Whig platform" as has been said. Despite the small majority in the House and notwithstanding the heterogeneous elements of which it was composed, the bill for the incorporation of a national bank was easily passed, and presented to President Tyler, who promptly vetoed it. A second bill, modified in an attempt to meet the objections of the President, was prepared, after a meeting of members of the Congress with members of the Cabinet, was then passed by the Congress, and this also the President vetoed.

No present profit would accrue from a reëxamination of the question of responsibility for the misunderstanding that at once arose as to the President's good faith in this matter. The important facts are these. The bill was presented as a part of a party program and passed by the Congress as such. The President, who was not a member of this party organization and, judged by his former practice as well as his present expression, of no mind to act as an aid to it, stood across the path of party achievement. His position in the government gave him the power.

That a man who had come to power in the way Tyler had, and holding power as he did, could thus wreck the plans of party leaders backed by majorities in Congress, illustrated,

anew, the balance of powers provided in the Constitution. Also it casts a flood of light upon the inchoate character of party politics of the time. Yet party organization was strong in this crisis, stronger than one might anticipate of a party of such recent origin. All members of the cabinet except the Secretary of State resigned in protest. This move was calculated to add force to the charge that Tyler was no Whig. Truly he had never been a Whig; for not having membership in the party organization, he could have gained title to the name only out of acquiescence in the party's will. This he had never given.

Tyler stated succinctly the basis for the position he had taken: "to reject any measure which might, in his opinion, conflict with the Constitution or otherwise jeopardize the prosperity of the country" was his right and duty. Here was a position of aloofness which insured the failure of party government, except where the occupant of the Presidency was supported by majorities in the Congress in sympathy with his views and at all times disposed to do his will. The moment there was disagreement, unless there existed a two thirds party majority in the Congress, the action of the President could prove an insuperable obstacle to party success.

Naturally such an impasse resulted in the appearance of two parties where there had seemed to be one. The bulk of the existent Whig majorities in the Congress continued to support the Clay leadership until the congressional elections of 1842 swept them from controlling power. Clay himself resigned his seat in the Senate in March of 1842. With his departure, and indeed even before, the elements in Congress that had eagerly clutched at power in 1841, resumed the minority rôle so familiar to them since the middle of the term of John Quincy Adams. The Democrats came to have a majority of seventy in the House of Representatives.

But the President had office until March of 1845. Generally

branded as a traitor to party, and a "man without a party," he attempted to create by his opportunity in leadership and patronage a party of his own. A program was presented to the Congress. Such Democrats as John C. Calhoun and Thomas H. Benton lent their aid to him at times, but were, of course, not members of the President's party as were such Virginians as Wise, Upshur, Tucker and Gilmer. At the best, however, it was a small group of leaders, whose existence as such was due not to great hope of success at the polls, but to the accident that gave their leader the opportunity not only to rule the country, but to play havoc with existing party alignments.

Even in Virginia there was little response in the electorate. But because of the fixed term of office, the Democrats as well as the Whigs, as party organizations, were devoid of power and impotent to act. A coterie of State-rights Democrats were in control. They, as well as others, naturally turned to the possibility of coalition as a means of retaining power in the election of 1844. In the war of the two great party organizations a small group might secure again the opportunity of governing. Calhoun saw this. Control of the executive branch of government offered the way.

No portion of Tyler's program has been given greater attention than his insistence upon the annexation of Texas. It is true he came to give it primary place in his interest. However, it was not this but the subsequent fate of the proposal that makes it of political importance, for he did not in the end succeed in identifying the issue with his own leadership. There was at no time a serious likelihood that he would be nominated by the Democrats. But, as the event proved, they took over this issue and made it the touchstone of their campaign.

In Baltimore, at the same time as the Democratic party convention, a "Tyler convention" met, at which most of the states were represented. It nominated Tyler for the Presi-

dency. It could not have represented any organized body of voters. But its meeting revealed again the status of "party" at the time. Tyler accepted the nomination, but late in August withdrew from the canvass. Without widespread party organization there was no hope, the moment the time arrived for a vote of the electorate.

The defeat of Van Buren in 1840 had left the Democratic organization intact. As has been seen, a Democratic majority was secured in the House of Representatives at the mid-term election. The course of political events since the summer of 1841 had on the whole favored the Democratic organization. Yet in the approach of the year 1844 there was an unaccustomed rôle for the Democracy. In the three previous elections it had been the party in power, and a party convention had been easily arranged. Now there was general agreement upon a convention, but uncertainty as to time, as to the way delegates should be chosen, and as to the number to be selected.

When the convention met in Baltimore in late May, it was as the first national meeting of the Democracy in which the outcome was not certain at the outset. An extensive preliminary campaign among the confirmed adherents of the party had resulted in two conditions of outstanding importance: a majority of the delegates came to the convention pledged to the nomination of Martin Van Buren; and a group of leaders, of whom Robert J. Walker of Mississippi was the most active, came with the determination to place the party, in its candidate and in its platform, in a rôle quite unlike that previously held. Their intention was to make the annexation of Texas the outstanding demand of the party.

The nomination of Van Buren would defeat that objective. Because he had been President, his presentation immediately revived former alignments, personal and sectional. Moreover, Van Buren had in April written a letter in which he had declared that he believed annexation inexpedient. Here was a

definite issue within the group of leaders of the Democratic party. The convention was the arena in which a decision was secured. Despite the initial strength of Van Buren, Walker brought the convention to resolve that a two thirds vote was necessary to nominate for the Presidency. By this means Van Buren was eliminated, and James K. Polk, a party leader of experience and of decided views on expansion, was nominated. The party called, as Walker had asked six months earlier, for the reannexation of Texas and the reoccupation of Oregon.

A powerful party organization came from this convention. Its leaders had confidence in the issue upon which they proposed to go to the people. It was definite and it was easily understood. A vote for Polk was a vote to place a well recognized party organization in control of the government. It also indicated, among other things, a desire for expansion. Seldom had so clear an issue been presented.

Clay, who in late May became the nominee of the Whig party, had in April in no uncertain terms declared his opposition to annexation. "I consider the annexation of Texas at the present time as a measure compromising the national character, involving us certainly in the war with Mexico, probably with other foreign powers, dangerous to the integrity of the Union, inexpedient in the present financial condition of the country and not called for by any general expression of public opinion." [4] This was quite strong enough at the time, and made up for the lack of a party platform. But as the outcome of the election proved, so definite a stand would have been of more avail for a candidate less known for a tendency to compromise and one who had not, as had Clay in 1839, placed himself in such a position upon the matter of the extension of slavery as to excite the relentless opposition of the anti-slavery elements in the North.

For in this election of 1844 the Liberty party had a ticket

[4] Published in *The National Intelligencer* (April 27, 1844).

in seven states, and its nominee, James G. Birney, polled sixty-two thousand votes. The greatest strength was in New York and Massachusetts, but there were votes in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana and Illinois. Had these votes been cast for Clay, he could have been elected. In this, the first instance of the primary effect of a third party upon an election result, it was naturally remarked that in the freedom of candidature possible in the American government, deciding power appeared to rest with a comparatively small group of voters, who under a party name and bound together by an all inclusive interest, were able to produce a result which doubtless many of their members would not have desired. It seemed doubtful that all of them, despite their general distrust of the Whig candidate, would have voted directly to place the Democratic organization in office had they seen that result as the important outcome of their action.

Although he had not a great lead in the popular vote, Polk had a majority of sixty-five in the electoral college. Despite the defeat of Clay his adherents could point to the fact that he had polled more votes than had been cast for Harrison four years before. As the actual, as well as the titular, leader of the Whig party, he had shown himself able to win great backing in the electorate. This emphasized anew the importance of the irritating and violent political propaganda that had for ten years attracted a growing attention among political leaders in most of the northern states.

In New York especially, the leaders of the two party organizations had learned the danger to their power resting in the organization of political sentiment upon special problems, particularly that interested in curbing the extension of slavery. For although the Liberty party was essentially a party of abolition, its leaders in their formulation of issues and in their discussion of personalities, could count on a large anti-slavery sentiment in the Whig and Democratic parties. In time this

condition was to be the basis of a new alignment of parties. For the present such later outstanding leaders as S. P. Chase and Charles Sumner were content to use the vague and uncertain anti-slavery sentiment, without attempt to organize it as the basis of a national party.

In addition to the threat involved in their every action on election day, the cause of the Liberty party was anathema to the great bulk of the people of the United States, because of the methods and procedure of two types of public men, neither of which were identified with the political abolitionists. Garrison, the most violent of the opponents of slavery, would have no participation in politics whatever, and thus closed the door upon any prospect of attaining his ends by the means of the ballot. J. Q. Adams, by no means an anti-slavery man, had become identified with the issue because of his struggle for the right of petition in Congress. Both Garrison and. Adams by their actions furthered the approach of the day neither sought, when the issue of slavery would be the outstanding issue in practical politics.

When the Democratic party resumed control of the government in March of 1845, the change was not as marked as it might have been. The party had been in control of the House for the past two years. Moreover, the outgoing President and his Secretary of State had long been Democrats, and the incoming party had adopted as its own their demand for the acquisition of Texas. Indeed when he came to power, Polk found the offer of annexation an accomplished fact, and upon him rested the burden of its results, as well as the accomplishment of the other items in his definite program.

Polk intended to be leader of his party, as well as President of the United States.[5] He gathered about him as advisors a group of experienced party-leaders representative of the various items in his program. With such men as William L. Marcy,

[5] A most important political study is E. I. McCormac, *James K. Polk.*

and James Buchanan, together with R. J. Walker in the cabinet, Polk also kept in touch from the first with older leaders of the party. Of these, Thomas H. Benton and Lewis Cass were outstanding. Even Calhoun was now in apparent favor with the party organization he had so long refused to acknowledge, and of which he had never been a member. As in the earlier period of Democratic control, a powerful party newspaper in Washington seemed a necessity to the administration. This need was supplied by the Washington *Union* edited by Thomas Ritchie. Polk used this paper, as Jackson had used the *Globe*, to broadcast the news of the party leaders to the faithful voters spread over the country.

Polk and his party adherents achieved a remarkable degree of success. Democratic majorities in Congress enacted a moderate tariff bill, and an independent treasury bill, thus providing the fixed position of the party upon these questions of long standing. With the successful outcome of the war with Mexico which had resulted from the annexation of Texas, the party had seemed threatened with disaster in the struggle over the terms of the peace treaty. But despite opposition within his party in both Cabinet and Congress, Polk carried his own program to what he considered a successful conclusion.

But the acquisition of a vast territory, which was the chief outcome of the war, was itself the impelling cause for a division in the party organization. The policy of the President on internal improvements had been displeasing to a considerable element in the party in the Northwest. But it was not until August of 1846, and then upon a bill to appropriate money for the use of the President in negotiating with Mexico, that a vote was taken which showed a fundamental division within the party. In this period, as has been seen in earlier periods, there were always dissenters within party organizations. Polk had been less troubled than most leaders. The war had helped. Now its outcome was to prove a Pandora box.

A Democratic member of the House of Representatives prepared an amendment to the appropriation bill, providing that in the expected accessions of territory slavery should be forever forbidden. Supported by Whigs, as well as Democrats, most of them from the North, the proviso was passed by the House of Representatives. Although defeated in the Senate, it remained an issue of outstanding popular interest, for it represented a means by which the various elements of growing anti-slavery sentiment could unite in a matter of practical politics. This they promptly did. The first test of the power of the existent party organizations successfully to withstand the fire of insurgents within their respective bodies came in the election of 1848.

In the case of the Whig party it was not an issue but a candidate that seemed to concern those who were members of the organization. It is true that one of the leaders, Weed, had early in 1846 declared in favor of the nomination of General Zachary Taylor, and as that officer's popularity increased in the course of the war, he was widely discussed and indorsed by newspapers and in public meetings. When, in May of 1847, Taylor declared that he would be the candidate of no party, the way was open for Whig partisans to declare the inadvisability of the organization's lending itself to raise Taylor to the Presidency. He reiterated the same view later, pointing out that he had never voted, but adding, in a eulogy of Clay, that he would have voted for him in 1844.

Since the Whig convention did nominate Taylor, it may be well to include further statement of his position. He said in 1847, in substance, that in the event of election to the Presidency he would feel bound to serve the people, and that he had no opinion on political matters. Later he said that upon such matters as the tariff, the currency, and internal improvements the will of the people would be properly expressed through Congress. This would determine him in his action

as President. Inasmuch as the Whig convention presented no platform, and pointed to the utterances of their candidate as sufficient guide to their intentions, we may judge that the leaders, in 1848, as in 1840, were content to let the matters of party control and determination of party policy wait upon the indorsement of their candidate by the electorate.

They were aided in this view by a general sentiment in the country, born partly of the emotions aroused in the period of the war, and partly of the growing distrust of the very organizations such a policy as outlined above would tend to strengthen. In the preliminaries of this campaign much appreciation of Taylor was expressed because he refused to be the candidate of a party. The purport of these views has been thus summarized:

"They wanted a change, and Taylor, by refusing to be a party candidate, was their man. It was useless to ask the reason why, and wherefore, or what particular principles were furthered by his election. The answer is, he is an honest man, and may be trusted to do right." [6]

Early appreciation among Democrats of the likelihood of a popular wave in favor of a war hero had led to an attempt to place in general charge of the American army a lieutenant-general who would outrank both Zachary Taylor and Winfield Scott. Thomas H. Benton, a Democrat, was the man considered for this position. The matter was never carried through, because of personal rivalries within the Democratic party, and the war closed with no outstanding officer of Democratic persuasion. For a time there was some thought of using Taylor.

Fear of the more violent outbreak of already existent dissensions within the party led some to urge such a compromise as seemed to be presented in the nomination of a candidate with no decided views in politics. The Demo-

[6] J. B. McMaster, *History of the People of the United States*, VII, 541.

cratic convention call was issued in January of 1848 by the Democratic members of Congress. In late May the delegates convened at Baltimore. Thirty states were represented. The fact that in the end determined the result was the appearance of two rival delegations from New York, one led by William L. Marcy, representative of the powers that were dominant, the other led by Silas Wright and Martin Van Buren. They personified two factions in New York State politics, but their importance rested in their struggle for control of the national organization. The convention attempted to effect a compromise, but failed, and both delegations lost their vote.

The convention then nominated Lewis Cass of Michigan on the fourth ballot. Cass was a party leader of long experience and great popularity. His nomination tended to emphasize the power of the Northwest in the party. His administration would be one in which party organization would rule as far as he could determine the matter.

The Democratic platform of 1848 was a series of denials, not of acts of the party in its previous career, but of powers residing in the national government. Congress not only had no power to make internal improvements, to charter banks, to establish a protective tariff; it had no power to interfere with domestic institutions. This was, it may be said now, fundamental Democratic doctrine, and the Polk administration had done much to make it so. More important was the position of the candidate upon the question of slavery in the new territories. He stated that he believed that the settlers in a new territory should be allowed to determine for themselves whether they would have slaves or not.

We have seen how in 1844 the Liberty party had played an important part in the result. Now in 1848 it was apparent to disaffected members of both Whig and Democratic parties that a party of positive views might exercise a determining

influence. None anticipated a success that would give control of the government; consequently a union of discordant elements was effected. At Buffalo the Free Soil party nominated Martin Van Buren for the Presidency. He polled nearly 300,000 votes in twenty-one states, although half of them were cast in New York, indicating that the sources of his greatest strength were quite other than had supported Birney four years before. Van Buren carried no state, and Taylor and Cass each carried fifteen. Taylor carried New York, due to the great vote of Van Buren in the state, which was lost to Cass. Thus the Whigs won the election.

As a result of the election of 1848 the Senate remained Democratic and the House was divided in such a way as to give nine members, elected as Free Soilers, the balance of power. It was apparent that, at a time when an overshadowing practical and immediate problem was to come upon those in charge of the government, no party was securely in power, and none was in an effective position to lead, because of declaration or previous career. Individuals were to play the leading roles.

### BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

General: Edward Channing, *History of the United States*, V (1921); G. P. Garrison, *Westward Extension* (1906); J. B. Mc-Master, *History of the People of the United States*, VII (1910); James Schouler, *History of the United States*, IV (1894); A. B. Hart, *Slavery and Abolition*, (1906).

Portions of a shorter account of political history: W. E. Dodd, *Expansion and Conflict* (1915).

Special studies: D. R. Fox, *Decline of Aristocracy in the Politics of New York* (1919); C. M. Thompson, *Illinois Whigs before 1846* (1915); A. C. Cole, *The Whig Party in the South* (1913); G. M. Stephenson, *The Political History of the Public Lands, from 1840 to 1862* (1917).

The most important single study is E. I. McCormac, *James K.*

*Polk* (1922). There are also: T. W. Barnes, *Memoir of Thurlow Weed*, II (1884); M. M. Quaife (Ed.), *Diary of James K. Polk* (1910); L. G. Tyler, *Letters and Times of the Tylers* (1884). *See also* C. H. Ambler "Virginia and the Presidential Succession," in *Turner Essays in American History*, 165–202.

"In the life-history of a great political party there are five natural divisions or chapters: the first deals with its origin; the second, with the period between organization and advent to power; the third, with its experiences while in power; the fourth with its experiences while in opposition; the fifth, with the causes and circumstances of its dissolution."

A. D. MORSE, *Parties and Party Leaders*, 25.

# CHAPTER VIII

## FAILURE OF PARTY GOVERNMENT

Questions of slavery as party problems—Various views within the two party formations—Party as an agency in politics—Party regularity—Prevalence of a belief in democracy—The Taylor administration—Method of making the Compromise of 1850—Realities in party grouping—Dissenters—Pierce and the Democratic leaders—Independents in politics—Popular revolt against party government—Methods of protest—The Republican party—Breakup of the Democratic party—Failure of party government.

"UNDER a constitutional government, the history of political parties is the civil history of the country." [1]  Such a conception demands that a large attention be given the campaign utterances and expressed beliefs of party groups and particularly the rise and fall of political leaders and their programs in Congress, irrespective of their relation to well recognized party organizations.  It is, indeed, political history.  In this sketch of party development in the United States, party has been considered in a narrower sense in the hope of showing the influence that party organization has had in the more inclusive political history of the government.

About the middle of the nineteenth century the situation was such as to offer ample illustration of the difference in point of view that may still need emphasis.  For twenty years the two important party organizations had been for the most part non-committal upon the questions of abolition of slavery and of extension of the slave system, despite the fact that both questions were of growing concern to an ever increasing number of citizens.  Except for a reference in these years to the organization of the Abolitionist, the Liberty and the Free

[1] J. F. Rhodes, *History of the United States*, I, 2.

Soil parties, and a statement of their platforms and an analysis of their strength and of their occasional victories the student of party history would find little to notice. The little additional evidence that he would report would have reference to the individual here and there within the great parties who gave indication of a spirit of insurgency on these questions, or questions that grew out of them. But the great mass of congressional history and of the larger political history of this period is not of immediate interest to the student of party as such. Only as the party organization is isolated, unnatural as this process is in large measure, is it possible to report accurately upon its activity and to assess at proper value its place in the political history of these years.

In these twenty years during which the two dominant parties expressed no unmistakable views upon these questions, the members of the organizations, as well as the great mass of voters who habitually voted one or the other of the two tickets, were possessed of variegated views. At such a time the point of view of the man occupying the Presidency became of greater interest than in a time of settled policy upon an all-absorbing question. Because of his exercise of power the President was chosen with an eye to his views, or absence of views, upon these questions.

As long as the great parties took no definite stand an examination of votes in Congress proved an unsafe guide in determining the reaction of parties to issues as they arose. But it was a guide to the movements of opinion within each of the parties. These votes reflected public opinion, and in a measure foreshadowed the bases of later party position.

The two political organizations, the Democratic and the Whig, had become "accepted institutions of the country." It was within these institutions that political life flourished. Such party activity demanded of its devotees great energy and cleverness. A type of man different from those who had

appeared at earlier times was needed in the primary task of governing. The declarations and particularly the symbols of earlier days were still used. Statesmen still appeared in Washington, but most of them held aloof from party. Yet party was the great weapon of power. He who controlled the dominant party came to rule the country. By 1850 the great mass of voters had been regimented into two great armies—albeit frontier armies—and it was in the actual command and supply and recruiting of these armies that powerful leaders were developed. Party had indeed become as never before the agency for working out problems in democracy, not by development of opinion or belief, but by providing a means whereby the average citizen kept a contact with his government and secured an opportunity to express his will in such a way as to make it effect the particular result he had in mind when he cast his ballot.

The overwhelming sense of party regularity that possessed the mass of voters accounts for the difficulty with which the questions avoided by party organizations forced their way to a consideration at time of elections. Agitation was effectively kept alive by individual insurgents, both in and out of Congress, but decisive political action could only be taken at the time fixed for vote upon men for office. As the hold of "party" came to be broken at this point, the question of slavery, either its extension or its abolition, came more and more to have a hearing.

"Democracy now ruled unchallenged in public life and thought, the democracy, that is, of Jefferson and Jackson, which stopped short of including the negro, however much it emphasized the equality of the white man. By this time the states had completed the remodeling of their constitutions, and only a few serious changes were left to the years after 1850. Nearly everywhere state offices, including the judiciary, had been made elective, terms had been shortened, qualifications

other than manhood and residence abolished, and the final decision in matters of supreme importance in the public eye, such as the permission to charter banks or the extension of the suffrage, left to popular referendum."[2] So intense was the prevailing belief in democracy that the realities of actual government might well escape the average man.

General Taylor came to office in March of 1849. In the selection of his cabinet and the distribution of patronage, there was ample evidence that a new political organization was in control of the executive branch of the government. Not only were Democrats dispossessed, but such Whigs as Clay and Webster complained of the organization effected by the President, and the influence of Millard Fillmore and William H. Seward was as noticeable as was the lack of it among other Whigs, particularly those from the South.

In his selection of advisers, in his utterances, and in his policy in relation to the newly acquired territories Taylor indicated a lively appreciation of the extent of anti-slavery sentiment and its probable effect upon party success. But even had he lived Taylor could not have gone much farther without causing the party that elected him to divide into at least two parts. The arena for conflict was the Congress, in that it must determine the policy for the territories. As candidate Taylor had said that in the Congress he would find the will of the people.

The House of Representatives was organized only after a prolonged fight in which it was amply demonstrated that the division between Whigs and Democrats was chiefly on the basis of patronage, whereas among the factions disagreeing on the various questions that arose out of the existence of negro slavery there was intense conviction and bitter antagonism. When the House was finally organized it turned, as did the

[2] T. C. Smith, *Parties and Slavery*, 263-264.

Senate, to the question of the admission of California and of the organization of the territories in the area acquired as a result of the treaty of 1848.

The problem was pressed insistently upon the Congress because of the application of newly organized California for admission as a state. Its constitution forbade the existence of slavery. Consequently the issue was joined. The President urged the admission, but the Congress, as was shown in the struggle in the House over organization, was of too many minds to make possible either a simple Yes or a simple No. Neither political party could act effectively. Yet the slavery question was in such a form that action could not be long postponed. The President was helpless; no situation had heretofore shown so definitely how powerful political parties had become. In the strength or weakness of political parties the Congress must succeed or fail at the tasks set for it in the Constitution.

In the presence of innumerable bills in the Senate and House, each expressive of individual or group views, and in the absence of a party program and the obvious impossibility of one being developed, Clay came forward with a series of eight resolutions, designed by their moderation, and because they were presented in combination, to win the support of a majority in Congress. As the avenue for their submission was an indication of the lack of party initiative in this crisis, so the response of the Congress was overwhelming proof that diverse interests within each of the parties had reached a point where continued cohesion was a mockery. Harmony had become an impossibility whenever the elements of anti-slavery agitation, both within and without the parties, could force a slavery question to a place where a decision could not be evaded.

Although such outstanding leaders as Clay, Webster and Calhoun participated in the debate each for himself, they spoke also for groups and for traditions. The political mem-

ories evoked by the addresses of these three in the course of
this debate on the Compromise of 1850, in themselves, made it
memorable.   But above and beyond the immediate objective
of each, there was the brutal fact that near the end of their
period of political activity the resources of party power failed
them, just as throughout the forty years of their public service
party managers had thwarted their ambitions, and carried
on the business of the government which they had so often
attempted to direct.

Clay and Webster favored the compromise measures; Cal-
houn fought them, as insufficient protection for the slave in-
terests.   Seward of New York and Chase of Ohio spoke in
opposition, and their views were important as evidences of
the point of view that was eventually to capture a sufficient
number of votes to force the organization of a powerful third
party.   For the present they stood as views of a minority, a
minority that drew its inspiration, if not its greatest strength,
from the small bodies of men throughout the North who, under
varying names, had for years continued to agitate the stream
of public opinion on the question of slavery.   But they spoke
for no party at this time.

In the midst of the discussion came three occurrences which
uncovered still further the nature of party realities.   In the
Senate a special committee of thirteen members was appointed
to consider the resolutions.   This group of seven Whigs and
six Democrats, with Clay as chairman, became the caucus
that formed a combination to insure success.   It was a tem-
porary party of union and moderation.   The second occurrence
was the meeting in Nashville of a convention of men from nine
slave-holding states.   This was an indication of a southern
party that was gradually coming into a realization of its exis-
tence.   The third occurrence was the death of President Taylor
in July.   Fillmore, as Vice President, had indicated his ap-
proval of compromise.   Webster now became Secretary of

State, and the cabinet as a whole was favorable to the compromise. Thus placed, on a matter of primary importance, the administration looked with disfavor upon Seward and the element in the Whig party skeptical of the compromise, as well as those actively opposed.

So many were the votes in the course of the consideration of the compromise measures that it proved impossible to see clearly marked the various groups in the House and Senate. Rhodes states that in the Senate only four members favored all parts of the plan.[3] Despite the approval of the administration, and the warm advocacy of such outstanding Whig leaders as Clay and Webster, it was not a Whig party measure in any proper and exact sense. "The vote," concludes Rhodes. "portended a dissolution of the existing political parties."[4]

The first possible test of the vote of the electorate upon the passage of the Compromise measures came in the congressional elections of 1850. "Public meetings by the hundred were held in all parts of the free states to denounce it as unconstitutional, unmoral, unchristian, and abhorrent to every instinct of justice and religion, and to demand its repeal."[5] In the North the Democrats won many seats from the Whigs, and attained a large majority in the House. There were still a handful of Free Soilers. The Democrats made a slight gain in the Senate. Two new members, Wade of Ohio and Sumner of Massachusetts, had been elected by a coalition of Whigs and Free Soilers. These, together with Seward and Chase, constituted a group that promised continuous trouble for those who wished to consider the Compromise of 1850 as settling the slavery question. The Whig caucus in 1851 formally indorsed the Compromise. This indorsement represented the official party attitude. The Democratic caucus did not approve the Compromise, but with such seasoned and masterful politicians as Marcy, Buchanan, Cass and Douglas,

[3] Rhodes, *op. cit.*, I, 183.    [4] *Ibid.*, 185.    [5] Smith, *op. cit.*, 15-16.

all so-called "Unionists," the official position of the Democratic party was not in doubt.

At a time when party formations of long standing had to meet the attacks of men in public life who were primarily interested in questions not hitherto considered as party issues, opportunity was given to see more clearly than in times of party regularity the actual working of public opinion within the areas usually given over to party manifestations. Because party formation by 1850 had become so fixed, the most important fight upon any urgent public question had to be first made in one or in both parties. As this has come to be the general practice in recent years upon all important questions, the way in which the fight was waged in the decade prior to 1860 is of peculiar interest.

The first party reaction after the passage of the Compromise of 1850 was to emphasize the finality of the action. This agreement on the part of the two organizations led to a revelation of the lack of fundamental political issues between them. It appeared, as never before so clearly, how there had evolved in America parties devoid of significant political platform or belief, but overwhelmingly interested in the control of the "people's government."

Although it embodied the party that had had control of the executive department for only four of the preceding eleven years, the Democratic national convention, when it met in Baltimore on June 1, 1852, included a great majority of the public men of national reputation. It certainly comprised the most powerful political organization in existence at the time. Cass, Douglas, Buchanan and Marcy were candidates before the convention. Each of these, as well as Franklin Pierce, who was nominated, had served in the Senate. So also had the nominee for Vice President, W. R. King. The platform indorsed the Compromise and "opposed the agitation of slavery in any form." As a coalition of interests from all

sections of the country, bent chiefly upon the control of the government in the interests of established practice, the Democratic party organization appeared a success.

The Whigs met in convention two weeks later. The divisions within the party were marked at the very outset. In the first place there were, of course, the divisions on basis of preference in leadership. In the second place there were at least three rival organizations, each seeking the control of the campaign. And finally there was the disagreement as to the attitude of the party on the question of the enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law, the one provision of the Compromise of 1850 which continued to agitate large bodies of sentiment in the North. General Winfield Scott had been the candidate of the Weed organization twelve years before; in this convention he was apparently the candidate of the Seward group. He was the third war hero to be named by this party. Despite the nomination, the convention indorsed the fugitive slave law, the minority on the vote being overwhelmed, four to one.

Yet it was the candidate and the organization back of him, rather than the official position of the party, that led to serious dissent within the party. A considerable number of Southern Whigs of standing and experience in the party refused their support in the campaign. Moreover, Webster advised those near him to vote for Pierce.

There was dissent not only from such quarters. The Free Soilers were revived under a different name, placed a ticket in the field and polled more than 150,000 votes. They called for a repeal of the Compromise of 1850, a measure that was undoubtedly as satisfactory to the bulk of the voters as it was to the great party organizations. The outcome gave Pierce every state except Tennessee, Kentucky, Vermont and Massachusetts. The power of direction was to pass again to the Democrats in March of 1853.

It was, of course, well recognized that Pierce had attained only a titular leadership of the party. In the party were men of outstanding leadership; there were a half dozen whose experience and whose declarations had many times given them followings. Such a man was Cass, who had been the nominee four years before. Douglas, who had commanded wide support in the convention of 1852, was a virile and positive leader, who might be expected to lead a band of followers in any office he might hold. But Pierce was no such leader. His nomination, and now his occupancy of the Presidency, reflected the desire of a powerful party organization to rule through its influence with an executive, as well as through its dominance in the Congress. The election returns of 1852 narrowed the circle of possibilities to those within the Democratic organization. In the makeup of the administration which took office in March, 1853, it was apparent that the aggressive forces of the North and West were less favored than those from the lower South.

A party which had come to power chiefly because of its excellent organization and its willingness to profit by the dissensions among its opponents, had nevertheless to present a program and to meet issues as they arose. A program was presented in the President's message of December, 1853, and called most emphatically for the construction of a Pacific railway. Such a recommendation, whatever its immediate origin, well illustrated the commercial spirit of a decade that gladly would have lost sight of anti-slavery agitation in an absorbing interest in business expansion. An administration so constituted as to appeal to the bulk of the established business interests in every part of the country seemed in a fair way to hold power until the fire of attack from the opposition should detach some portion of the party, or a problem of administration should force a decision supremely distasteful to some leader of initiative and courage.

The great danger for the Democrats did not lie in the activity of the Whig organization which had for twenty years contested the field. It was found in the activity of certain members of that party, whose public position and whose strength rested within the support of a large body of sentiment throughout the North. Such leaders were Sumner, Chase and Wade. These men, holding office as a result of coalitions, and consequently less responsive to party organization, excited the intense opposition of party leaders such as Douglas. It was not only that they drew much of their support from those who were intent upon disturbing the system of slave labor in the South; it was also that such basis for office-holding denied the first tenet of a strict party man—that is, party regularity. Such an issue might overtop all party barriers in time of crisis. There would follow a realignment as there would be reorganization.

This was the situation when the question of slavery was forced anew upon the Congress and upon the country. The initiative came apparently from Douglas, who introduced a bill providing for the admission of Nebraska with or without slavery. The bill subsequently carried an amendment directly repealing the Missouri Compromise of 1820. The proposal excited impassioned denunciation both in and out of Congress, but it won wide support at once from all elements in the South. The administration accepted the policy as its own, made support of the principle "a test of Democratic orthodoxy," and used its influence to carry the amended bill through Congress. The vote in the Senate showed the strength of the Democratic organization control, for the insurgents were few. The opposition was powerful in the House, but with the aid of a group of the southern Whigs the bill was passed, despite the votes of about one third of the Democratic membership, as well as heavy Whig opposition.

But this outcome at the close of a five months' discussion

did not dispose of the matter. The issue of slavery extension had been so defined that continued popular discussion was inevitable. A group of independents in Congress had issued an appeal asking a general consideration and an opposition to the proposed legislation. Its enactment gave these and others their platform in the elections of 1854. The Democratic candidates had to meet the attack upon this legislation as the work of their party. The opposition was not united in name or in organization. There was introduced into the situation at this point a development hitherto unknown to national politics.

In 1854 appeared a secret political society, guided by a few men, and with wide ramifications, pledged to the exclusion from office of all except the native-born, and those friendly to such exclusion. Opposition to the foreign born had appeared from time to time since the beginning of the history of the nation, but to this was added in the present movement opposition to any who professed the Catholic religion. The response of this political machine to the guidance of a few men was a revelation of new possibilities in American political methods. Notwithstanding the obvious limitation of its purpose, as well as its lack of permanent basis, it became in 1854 the agency for the expression of a burst of public sentiment, most of it quite at variance with the avowed purpose of its organizers. It was a weapon ready at hand with which to accomplish a negative political result; that is, the defeat of those who had favored the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska legislation. Its candidates polled one fourth of the vote in New York, and two thirds of the vote in Massachusetts.

"Nothing in American political history is more remarkable than the way in which the voters of the northern states responded to the excitement of 1854. Except in the North-west, their action was so far from being what anyone would have predicted that it seemed scarcely credible. The diversion of

the fierce anti-southern anger of the eastern states into the construction of a party whose professed principles were absolutely unrelated to the measures which cáused the upheaval seemed utterly inexplicable on national grounds." [6]

But there were the beginnings in this campaign of an organization of more permanent character. Even though it had not developed into a national party that eventually obtained control of the government, the beginnings of this new party would have had a greater importance than those of the Know-Nothing party. For whereas that party, as the Anti-Masonic before it, was built upon a special issue, having no relation to the general policy of the government or to the task of governing, except in the proposed restriction upon office holding, the organizers of the Republican party, as it came in 1854 to be generally termed, were concerned with a definite question of national importance. They aspired to make their party the vehicle for continued use by men with a national program.

A mass meeting, attended by men who had been Whigs, Democrats or Free Soilers, had adopted at Jackson, Michigan, in 1854 the term "Republican." How far "slavery" had come to dominate politics we may see in their denunciation of the Kansas-Nebraska legislation and of the Fugitive Slave Law, and their pronouncement that slavery was a moral and social and political evil. The impelling purpose of these men was made clear in their bitter attack upon the men in control of the national government, whose plans were at variance with the desires of "free men." In 1854 definite beginnings were made in Wisconsin, and lesser manifestations appeared in Ohio, Indiana, Iowa, and Illinois.

The refusal of the regular party man to meet such an issue was well reflected in the message of President Pierce in 1854, when he said: "It is our duty to render cheerful obedience

[6] Smith, *op. cit.*, 120.

to the laws of the land, to unite in forcing their execution, and to frown indignantly on all combinations to resist them."

Notwithstanding the intense public interest in the elections of 1854, there was no opportunity for a national campaign. The Democratic party was attacked throughout the North, but in state contests and congressional contests the attacking forces were not responsive to one or even two organizations. "The result was worked out at random." In a time of political need the weapon at hand was the one used. The Democratic party lost its previous hold in nine states, and in the congressional elections lost sixty-two seats in the House of Representatives. But no one could say what the victorious elements would do with the power they had won. Public opinion had done its part; the positive task of party, came as always, after the taking of office by those elected.

An attempt at a share in the government was made in the House of Representatives when it met in December of 1855. There were only seventy-five Democrats. The victorious opposition was divided; more than a hundred Americans (as the Know-Nothing members now were termed), forty Republicans, and a number who called themselves Independents. In the contest for the Speakership party strength was revealed. It was only after two months of struggle that Banks of Massachusetts, who had been the candidate of the Republican minority, was elected. This was in February of 1856, a presidential year. The antagonisms, personal and sectional, which had been uncovered in this fight, together with the regaining of ground by the Democrats in the state elections of 1855, seemed to promise a victory for the Democratic organization in the presidential contest.

Previous to the meeting of this Congress the movement to provide an opposition to the Democrats on a national scale had gained great headway. It has been pointed out how councils were formed throughout the country, "honey-comb-

ing the local Republican or anti-Nebraska Coalition of the West with a Know-Nothing oath-bound membership, and practically absorbing the entire southern Whig body." An enrollment of one million was claimed. Such a method seemed to promise unusual success. It emphasized the part of the voter in politics. But the transition to an organization of the existent type is seen in its use of the term "Union" as a rallying cry, and its conciliatory position on slavery taken by the officers in the Council of 1855. The national Council broke in two, however, in February, 1856, over the question of slavery. In its attempt to succeed by ignoring the slavery dispute and by winning support, both North and South, it failed as had the Whigs.

A sectional party in the presidential campaign of 1856 was assured when in February a preliminary meeting of Republicans was held in Pittsburg. Summoned by a committee representative of Republican organizations in nine states, it brought together men of Republican persuasion from twenty-three states. This assembly provided a committee to further the work of organization, and called a national convention to meet in June. The issue presented by slavery in Kansas had called this party into existence. Its platform denied to Congress the right to establish slavery in a territory; it held that Congress had the right to abolish slavery in the territories and, moreover, ought to do so. Here was a definite stand, representative apparently of a wide-spread sentiment in the North. It was no longer merely the view of extremists, who were expected to have no tangible objectives in politics.

Yet any possibility of success rested in an effective coalition of divergent interests and of those having dissimilar political backgrounds. John C. Fremont was nominated. He had a wide reputation as an explorer in the Far West, and later had been elected to the Senate from the state of California, but otherwise was unknown in politics. He was opposed to slavery

in the territories, and had qualities that led the party leaders to consider him a popular candidate.

The Democratic problem in 1856 was two-fold. A candidate who could win support of all important elements in the party must be secured. Also, the Kansas question must be put in a way of settlement before the fall elections, for continuance of the struggle in Kansas made votes for the Republican ticket, just as did the attack of Brooks upon Sumner. The conservative party forces had everything to gain from another apparent compromise. This was offered in the shape of an amendment to the original enabling act for Kansas, providing for a vote of the people of the territory. It was passed by the Senate, but held up by the Republicans who controlled the House. The Douglas position on slavery in the territories represented the position of the Democratic party in this campaign. But the cautious and conservative Buchanan, who had been in the party service for a generation, was the candidate.

The widespread bitter feeling in 1856 was a warning that the method of balloting as a means of deciding who should control the national government might not be accepted as conclusive by the defeated party. The advent of the Republican party made it no longer possible to consider the contests as between rival organizations, each of which was intent upon furthering certain economic interests and political policies, which the other disapproved, but recognized as legitimate objectives. For leaders of the Republican party made it plain that there was only one side to what they considered a moral question, and the more outspoken members of the Democratic party were as emphatic in their conviction that the bulk of the Republican attack was not legitimate politics.

The Democratic appeal to the voters had an element of great strength. Buchanan stressed his promise for a fair vote on the question of slavery in the territory of Kansas. This appealed to sentiments of democracy and fair play, and "to the

liking for local self-government which was ingrained in the North."

The total presidential vote was greater than in 1852, and the Democratic ticket gained most of it. But the combined vote for Fremont and for Fillmore, the candidate of the Know-Nothing party, was greater than that cast for Buchanan. He carried every slave state except Maryland, which was carried by Fillmore, who seemed to poll the greater part of the former Whig vote in the South. Fremont had 114 electoral votes, and it seemed certain that the Republican party had elements of permanence.

Pierce was the first Democratic President since Jackson to hand over his office to a successor of like party faith. Yet the changes in office were extensive, revealing that the Democratic organization was not of one mind. It actually represented a coalition of fairly distinct factions. A new group had come into office. However, in the formation of his cabinet Buchanan did not recognize the Douglas faction. Jefferson Davis, not Stephen A. Douglas, was to speak for the administration in the Senate.

Before an opportunity was afforded the administration to present its recommendation to Congress as to the settlement of the Kansas question, the party issue was more emphatically defined by the decision of the Supreme Court in the case of Dred Scott. The court held that the negro was property, and thus subject to the protection of the federal government in the territories. Moreover neither Congress nor a territorial legislature could prohibit slavery. Such a decision seemed to dispose of the popular sovereignty doctrine completely.

Thus was the authority of the judiciary thrown across the path taken by the Republicans in the campaign of 1856. Acceptance of such a decision would cut the ground from under their great reason for existence. They defied it. They proposed to add to their objectives, that of reorganizing the

Supreme Court to the end that such a decision would be reversed. Abraham Lincoln went so far as to charge that the members of the court had conspired with leading members of the Democratic organization.

The Democrats in Congress were by no means in agreement. When Buchanan presented his program for Kansas in December of 1857, he found Douglas at once in open opposition. Indeed the method of Douglas and his attack upon the President led to so complete a breach that it was the plan of a considerable number of Republicans that the Republican party should lend aid to Douglas in his fight. The break in the national Democratic organization had come.

The remainder of the Buchanan administration consisted for the most part of the efforts of the President and his supporters from the South to make a show of the authority that they exercised. But there was no real hope of a continued control of the government without a wide and powerful backing in the North and East. Control of the southern and border states could not win for them a victory in a straight-out contest with the Republican party, for majorities in the more populous northern states would produce a majority in the electoral college. In the obvious unwillingness of the northern Democrats to follow a familiar road of acquiescence in the demands of the aggressive southern Democrats could be read the certainty of a divided vote in 1860. This meant that the party of Jackson, which had suffered many losses, yet had made apt gains at critical moments, was at last to divide.[7] The issue of slavery forced the division.

During the decade, 1850–60, in which the two great national party organizations had gradually gone to pieces, and

[7] The simple fact is this: if we look at the party as a real institution, as of course it is, we must realize that it was almost the last to yield to the forces of disunion and disorganization; and when it did yield, disunion was a fact." A. C. McLaughlin, *The Courts, the Constitution and Parties*, 137.

a powerful third party had arisen out of the soil prepared in the earlier attempts at dissent, the country had been primarily interested in financial and commercial development. It had been a period of expansion and prosperity. The means of more rapid transportation and easier communication had been provided. Machinery for the farm had worked a revolution in the preceding twenty years. The extension of railways had begun to open the trans-Mississippi West and the roads east of the river had cut the dependence of the Northwest upon the Mississippi river and united that section with the East. Population had risen from twenty-three million to more than thirty-one million. New cities appeared. It was a virile and aggressive electorate that went to the polls in 1860. Two new states, Oregon and Minnesota, had recently entered the Union, marking anew the advance of the frontier, and the direction of the flow of pioneers.

## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

General: T. C. Smith, *Parties and Slavery* (1906); J. F. Rhodes, *History of the United States*, I, II (1892); Allen Johnson, *Life of Stephen A. Douglas* (1908); Frederic Bancroft, *William H. Seward* (1900).

Shorter account in W. E. Dodd, *Expansion and Conflict* (1915).

Special studies: Jesse Macy, *Political Parties in the United States, 1846–1861* (1900); T. C. Smith, *The Liberty and Free Soil Parties in the Northwest* (1897); C. R. Fish, *The Civil Service and the Patronage* (1905); L. D. Scisco, *Political Nativism in New York* (1901).

" . . . What parties say of themselves, as well as what they say of one another, is so biased by self-interest as to deserve little if any weight."

A. D. Morse, *Parties and Party Leaders*, 19.

# CHAPTER IX

## THE PARTY OF THE UNION

The Democratic party divides—The Republican coalition—Presidential vote of 1860—Emergence of a party of the South—The argument for nationalism—Organization of an administration party—Continuance of the two party system—Congressional elections of 1862—Leadership of Lincoln—Divisions in the party of the Union—Democratic convention in 1864—The platform of the Union party—The outcome of the elections of 1864—Party alignment in 1865.

THE Democratic national convention met in Charleston in April of 1860. The committee on resolutions, by a close vote, reported a platform which placed the party squarely on the ground of the decision of the Court in the case of Dred Scott. This was natural, in view of the record of the Buchanan administration. This record and this platform represented the Democratic party as it had functioned as an agency in government. Such was the actual position of the men in control of the national party organization, and they were willing to go before the voters with that platform. But a majority of the delegates were not of this mind. They rejected the proposal of the committee, and substituted the position of the party as stated in its platform of 1856; that is, the doctrine of popular sovereignty. Upon this all important question there were, then, two distinct views among those who could justly claim leadership in the Democratic party. Compromise was impossible. The majority which adopted the platform could not secure the necessary two-thirds vote to nominate its candidate, Stephen A. Douglas.

The convention broke up, and two conventions met subsequently, one at Richmond which adopted the platform of the

national committee and nominated John C. Breckenridge; the other at Baltimore where Douglas was nominated upon a platform which he had done so much to formulate. The control by Douglas of the party organizations in the northwestern states had enabled him to withstand the attacks of the administration. Now as the nominee of the convention which represented a majority of the voters who were normally Democratic in their suffrage, Douglas embodied the purpose and position of the Democratic party, as no one else did. Yet Breckenridge, Vice-President in the existent Democratic administration, was at once supported by Buchanan. The situation was confusing at best to the normal Democratic voter who wished to support his party.

In the meantime, what had become of the leadership which had been for years expressed in the Whig party? Much of it, as we have seen, had been found within the Know-Nothing or American party movement. Though this leadership was recognized as futile in the campaign of 1860, it appeared in the Constitutional Union party. Its presentation of John Bell, a veteran of the Jackson period, and its reliance upon the single appeal for a preservation of the union of states indicated the emptiness of its leadership. Yet before an electorate, many of whose members had long ceased to respect party names without in the slightest degree losing confidence in the wisdom, if not the efficacy, of the tried and familiar in candidate and platform, the appeal of this group of leaders was sure of a considerable response.

But just as four years before, so in 1860, it was obvious that the great bulk of the Whig leaders would be found within the Republican party. The outstanding candidates before the national convention of the party in Chicago had all been Whigs. William H. Seward, who had long served in the Senate, was the leading candidate, and it was only after his elimination, partly as a result of clever political manipulation, that the

road was open for the nomination of Abraham Lincoln. Many factors help to explain this outcome. By common consent the election was to be won in the states of the Northwest, and here Lincoln, rather than Seward, was the better candidate. In these states Douglas was the candidate who must be defeated. Moreover, to a convention in which expediency had a large share in the deliberations of its leaders, Seward appeared more radical than Lincoln. Careful examination of the utterances of the two might well have dispelled this notion, but, as it was, misapprehension led to the nomination of the man of more extreme views.

In view of the development of the Republican party appeal in this campaign, the utter democracy of Lincoln may have been a deciding factor with many a delegate, as it came to be an appealing symbol in the course of the summer and fall. At any rate, by the nomination of Lincoln the convention made up for doubts that some may have felt in reading the offered party utterance in the platform. For besides the declaration in favor of free homesteads and "remunerating prices" for farm products, in calling for state control of domestic institutions and in asking for encouragment of American industry, the platform revealed what Dodd has aptly termed, "genius of political management, not the fire of reformers." [1]

All parties to the contest in 1860 professed a reliance upon the voice of the electorate, at least to the extent of admitting that the decision regarding the personnel of the government to be provided after March of 1861 rested with the voters. No other attitude was possible, for long before this the democratic organization of parties was accepted by all. But in this campaign, as in no campaign since 1836, there was little likelihood that a majority decision could be reached. In the event of such an outcome, argument against the acceptance of the

[1] W. E. Dodd, *Expansion and Conflict*, 262.

program of a minority party, placed in power by a minority vote, would carry great weight. This pointed to an opening upon a course of action which in the event of a majority decision might have seemed less desirable.

The central appeal of each of the four party organizations was marked; the Republicans threw themselves definitely against the extension of slavery; the Douglas Democrats stressed the democratic phase of squatter sovereignty; the Breckenridge Democrats placed their case upon the powers of the Constitution and the interpretation of the Supreme Court; the Constitutional Unionists appealed to the love of the union of states. Of the four only the Republicans had a program that required definite and decided action once they were placed in office. Theirs was the position of initiative, and all recognized it as such.

The country divided into three sections;[2] the states north of the Mason and Dixon line; the states of the lower South; and the eight states of the upper South. Lincoln triumphed in the first; Breckenridge carried all of the second; and in the third Bell and Douglas were favored. It was a sectional division, and the victory won by Lincoln a sectional victory. Yet there were more than a million and a half votes cast against Lincoln in the North, and in the South more than half a million voted against Breckenridge. But, the country over, the votes cast for the two extremes, that is, for Lincoln and Breckenridge, exceeded by nearly a million those cast for Bell and Douglas. In the disposition of the voters thus displayed lay the possibility of refusal to accept the outcome, inasmuch as it could easily be seen that the Republican party had the backing of a decided minority.

Nothing revealed the general recognition of the importance of party control of government better than the action of the slave interests in the situation created by the minority vic-

[2] C. R. Fish, *The Development of American Nationality*, 357.

tory of the Republican nominee in 1860. Insofar as all phases
of conviction upon the questions of slavery were represented
in the new Congress, the political battle could presumably go
on as before. But it was generally recognized that with the
Republican party organization in control ·of the executive
branch of the government, the directing power of party ini-
tiative would soon place the questions of slavery in the way of
constant and direct attention. The party about to rule was
actuated by motives and ruled by purposes that could not be
recognized as "legitimate politics."

On several occasions prior to 1860 political parties, after
suffering defeat at the polls, had contemplated making an ef-
fort to persuade certain states to withdraw from the Union.
None of the attempts had gone far, but they revealed a com-
mon sentiment, born of the passion of heated controversy.[3]

In this case the overwhelming vote cast for the Brecken-
ridge ticket in the southern states was eloquent testimony of
the probable strength of a party of the South. There was a
unanimous vote in the South Carolina state convention of
December 1860, when it was resolved that secession was
the proper course. Within six weeks six other southern states
had followed suit. This was not the action of the Demo-
cratic party, nor was it a coalition party; it was a party of
the South.

In the meantime an attempt was made in the Congress to
provide such legislation as would induce all parties to accept
the decision at the polls and to acknowledge the incoming Lin-
coln administration. A committee of thirteen in the Senate
considered the proposed measures, among which was a consti-
tutional amendment providing for the prohibition of slavery in
the territory north of 36° 30″, and its acceptance and protection
south of the line. Neither extreme would accept the compro-
mise. In the House similar attempts failed. The final ad-

[3] *Supra*, 87; 106.

mission of the failure of party government to meet the crisis came in the suggestion that the proposed Crittenden compromise be submitted to a vote of the electorate. This was not done. The probable outcome, however, could be seen in the distribution of the popular vote in the November election of 1860.

A last effort on behalf of those so numerous in the border states was made in the Peace convention. This meeting was held in February; its proposal of a constitutional guarantee of slavery in the states was only a reiteration of the well understood Compromise position; yet the proposed amendment was quickly passed by the Congress, the Republican members favoring it.

The Republican party came to power in March 4, 1861, in the inauguration of Abraham Lincoln. His cabinet contained three men who had been Whigs, and four former Democrats. All had been Republicans in 1860. It was a party administration and there was to be a complete change. "Never before, even under Jackson, had there been so clean a sweep as in 1861." [4] Congress assembled in July. Because of the withdrawal of members-elect from the southern states the Republicans were in complete control in both House and Senate. The Republican party had as its great task the prosecution of the war. Democratic members of Congress, whose presence was an indication of their adherence to the national government, acquiesced in the necessary war legislation. But party lines did not disappear.

As was natural, there were in Congress many critics of the administration. They increased in number. Public opinion in the country at large was seriously divided. In this situation pulbic men of Democratic persuasion and newspapers, known as Democratic, came naturally to represent much of the opposition to the way the administration conducted the war, and

[4] Fish, *op. cit.*, 380.

therefore to the continuance of the Republican party in power. The first adequate test of the sentiment of the electorate upon the matter came in the congressional election of 1862. Prior to that time the party in power had shown its purpose in its record of legislation, particularly through a protective tariff. The administration had presented its war measure, the proposed emancipation of the slaves. There was no question in the campaign of 1862 as to the personnel or the program of the party in power.

On the face of the returns in the "free states" the Republicans won the support of a minority of the electorate. They were overwhelmingly defeated in Ohio and Illinois and Indiana. By what has been termed "a silent and drastic process" the election of a sufficient number of Republican members to provide a majority in the House was secured in the border states,—Missouri, Kentucky, Maryland. Thus only was the Republican administration able to proceed with a party support in the Congress.

The Republican party membership was not a unit. There were many causes and numerous evidences of dissent, but the great division came upon the question of the renomination of Lincoln. He had been, from the first of his administration, leader of his party, partly because of the great power of the executive, particularly in time of war, partly because of his knowledge of politics and his belief that success necessitated his active participation.

Those who wished a change in party policy, which meant of course a change in the policy of the government, bent their efforts to effect that change by the nomination of some other than Lincoln. The so-called salutary one term principle was used with effect. Since Jackson's reëlection in 1832 no President had been reëlected, and only one, Van Buren, had been renominated. Much was made of the need of a more aggressive leadership; there was a widespread demand for "extreme

measures;" there was reiteration that such a man as Fremont, Chase, Butler or Grant would make "as good a leader" as Lincoln, and by inference a better.

But important though these campaigns were in revealing the nature of the demands of their supporters, the outstanding fact was that a struggle for power existed within the party. The conflict over the Presidency was the occasion.

Early in the presidential year a committee was formed to work for the nomination of Chase who was then serving as Secretary of the Treasury. The movement was extensive, both in and out of Congress. Only after the indorsement of Lincoln by Ohio Republicans was it considered useless to continue the Chase candidacy. Those who persisted in their desire to eliminate Lincoln, met in mass meeting in Cleveland in late May and nominated John C. Fremont.

The Republican national convention met in Baltimore on June 7 as the "National Union" convention. The change of name is significant.[5] The means found necessary to effect a party victory in 1862, the insurgency of the radical Republicans, the widespread dissatisfaction in Congress, the open hostility of powerful journalists of undoubted loyalist sentiment, all dictated an emphasis upon saving the Union. Subordination of party, as such, must seem to be effected. The proceedings of the convention bore out this purpose, and the nomination of Andrew Johnson of Tennessee, a Unionist Democrat, as the running mate of Lincoln, was the crowning gesture.

Nevertheless it was the opinion of the Republican National Executive committee in late August that Lincoln could not be reëlected. He was so informed. The electorate, they asserted, would refuse to indorse an administration that was opposed to peace, and yet could not win the war. It was sug-

[5] W. A. Dunning, "The Second Birth of the Republican Party," in *American Historical Review*, XVI, 56.

gested that the withdrawal of both Lincoln and Fremont, and the presentation of another candidate, would enable Republicans to win a victory. This was later definitely proposed.

Such was the situation when the Democrats met in Chicago on the twenty-ninth of August. They saw clearly the definite division of the Republican vote, represented by the candidacy of Fremont, and it was believed that Lincoln would not secure the full vote of the conservative Republicans, whose great interest had come to be an end of hostilities.

In its organization the Democratic convention showed capacity for including all shades of belief in opposition to the administration. Horatio Seymour of New York as permanent chairman voiced the views of what were termed "war Democrats." "If this administration cannot save this Union, we can. Mr. Lincoln values many things above the Union; we put it first of all. . . . We demand no conditions for the preservation of our Union." The committee on resolutions reported through its chairman, C. L. Vallandigham of Ohio, the demand that "immediate efforts be made for a cessation of hostilities, and that a convention or some other unmilitary means be employed, that peace may be restored on the basis of the Federal Union of the States." This was the expression of those that had been termed "peace Democrats." All united in the nomination of George B. McClellan. and G. H. Pendleton of Ohio was nominated for the vice-presidency. In its appeal and its candidate the Democratic convention seemed to have taken firm hold upon the prevailing sentiment of dissatisfaction with the party in power. Success at the polls seemed assured.

But the election in November was a Republican triumph. The victories of Sherman had given the complete answer to the charge of the Democrats that the war was a failure. This brought back to the Republican ticket many who had thought to find military victory elsewhere. Moreover, the Fremont

candidacy had collapsed and thus the radical Republicans had no method of protest. Altogether, however, it seemed probable that it was the unionist sentiment, irrespective of previous party allegiance, that strengthened the Lincoln candidacy. Thus by a popular majority of nearly half a million the Republican party organization was retained in power.

The victory was the result of the common desire to keep the executive office in the hands of the Republicans. It in no way indicated a unity of feeling within the Republican party organization upon matters of policy. In the midst of the campaign the President and the dominant members of the party in the House had violent disagreement upon the reorganization of the states which had seceded from the Union and had now been taken over by the national government. The reëlection of Lincoln meant the continuance of the war. It meant the preservation of the Union. It meant also that there would be a continuance of the attempt to take party power from him and place it in the hands of Congressional leaders.

The assassination of Lincoln in April brought the matter of party leadership to a crisis. The reality of the bitterness of the struggle for party power was uncovered on the day following Lincoln's death, when referring to Johnson's accession to power, Senator Wade said to the new President, . . . "there will be no trouble now in running the government."[6] Indeed the day of Lincoln's death witnessed a party caucus to consider the matter of changes in the cabinet, and the determination of a party policy on matters involved in the reconstruction of the Southern states. Never had there been greater need of a party leader of initiative both in formulation of policy and development of program. Where was the leadership to be found?

[6] Quoted by Rhodes, *History of the United States*, VI, 151.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

General: J. F. Rhodes, *History of the United States*, III, IV, V, (1898, 1899); *History of the Civil War* (1917); James Schouler, *History of the United States*, V (1891). *See also* A. B. Hart, *Salmon P. Chase* (1899); J. A. Woodburn, *Thaddeus Stevens* (1913); Frederic Bancroft, *William H. Seward* (1900).

Shorter account in: W. E. Dodd, *Expansion and Conflict* (1915).

Special studies: E. D. Fite, *The Presidential Campaign of 1860* (1911); E. E. Ware, *Public Opinion in Massachusetts During Civil War and Reconstruction* (1916).

Shorter papers: W. E. Dodd, "The Fight for the Northwest in 1860," in the *American Historical Review*, XVI, 774; W. A. Dunning, "The Second Birth of the Republican Party," in *American Historical Review*, XVI, 56.

"The [party] organizations which have been created so patiently are as much a product of American genius as the huge industrial combinations which arouse both pride and fear."

ALLEN JOHNSON, "The Nationalizing Influence of Party," in *Yale Review*, XV, 292.

# CHAPTER X

## RULE OF THE WAR PARTY

Division of party strength in 1865—Position of President Johnson—Struggle within the Republican party—The issue between the President and the Republican majorities—The Democratic position and activity—The issue and outcome in election of 1866—The solidification of the Republican party—Nomination of Grant—The Democratic convention—The vote of 1868—The program of Republicans—Divisions within the leadership—Independents—The new power of party—The insurgents in 1872—The plight of the Democratic party—The popular revolt against Republican rule—The Democratic fortune in 1874—Political interest outside of the parties—Reform of politics—The nomination of Hayes—The opportunity of the Democrats—The vote of the electorate.

THE editor of *Harper's Weekly* wrote in February of 1865, "We are at the end of parties." He was referring to the fact that of party names existent at the opening of the war, only "Democratic" appeared to remain in general use. This Democratic party was a vital force, as we have seen, in the campaign of 1864, and although defeated, its adherents continued to be active. As for the party in power in the Congress, it was patent to every discerning observer that whatever name was applied to it, in its career as a war party it had acquired a considerable number of policies that would mark it distinctly as a party in time of peace. That the members of this party were seriously divided on matters of reconstruction might lead to disaster, but for the present the relationship with President Johnson was of first importance.

Johnson's nomination for the Vice-Presidency in 1864 had in no way admitted him to the councils of the Republican party. His accession to the Presidency placed him in a position not unlike that of Tyler in 1841. The power of the

party organization rested in the Congress. Would Johnson coöperate, or would he use the powers resident in the Presidency to thwart the purposes of the leaders of the Union-Republican party in the Congress? [1]

Until December of 1865, Congress was not in session. Consequently Johnson had some time in which to develop his policies. The matter of reconstruction in the states which had seceded was all important. Johnson's policies were not unlike those foreshadowed in the steps taken by Lincoln prior to his death. On May 7, 1865, he issued a proclamation of pardon which was intended to reach all except a few of the persons who had participated in the rebellion. This was an earnest of the general tendency of his policy, and as it was developed further it appeared, of course, that in the reorganization of the former states of the South the political power would again rest with the leaders of the rebellion. Indeed, under the rules prescribed by him the governments of the eleven states were quickly reorganized and when the Congress met the Republican leaders were at once put to a test of their strength.

It was apparent that these leaders had no intention either of accepting the leadership of Andrew Johnson or of acceding to any terms whereby the political power of the southern states would again be represented in the national government by ex-confederates. Unquestionably, fear of a control of the national government by a coalition of southerners and of northern sympathizers had a part in forming the resolution of the leaders of the war party; it certainly explains much of their bitterness. But quite apart from that, there was a great background of feeling throughout the North that resumption of former relations should not be too easily accomplished. Moreover, there was the question of the status of the former slave, a matter which gave grave concern to the great body

---

[1] See in particular, W. A. Dunning, "More Light on Andrew Johnson," in *American Historical Review*, XI, 574.

of former anti-slavery sentiment, and which presented at once complicated questions for the attention of the administrator as well as the legislator. Altogether, the leaders in the Congress had an unique opportunity to present a program for action. The public mind was prepared.

For a period after Johnson's accession to the Presidency, the extremists among the leaders of the war party had felt the President to be a man of their mind upon matters of reconstruction. The greater was their rage as the process of political reorganization in the South showed how powerful was the initiative of the executive in this matter, and that the President did not take their view of the need of a complete recognition of the negro. Their problem was not an easy one, inasmuch as a great body of sentiment in the North was not expected to be sympathetic to negro suffrage, however much doubt there might be of the wisdom of complete amnesty for former confederates. Yet in early autumn of 1865 such extremists as Charles Sumner and Thaddeus Stevens had shown their determination to fight for control of the war party. It seemed then and for some months after Congress assembled that they could not hope to succeed.

To the extent of asserting for the Congress the right to pass upon all major matters of reconstruction, the extremists found overwhelming support for their program when the Congress convened in December of 1865. Those who presented themselves as representative of any of the newly reorganized states were denied admission, and under the leadership of Stevens there was constituted a joint committee of the Senate and House to make inquiry into the whole matter of reconstruction, including the status of the negro, and to present a solution of the problem exhibited by the presence of officials elected under the terms of the President's plan of reconstruction. All this was quite within the recognized powers of the Congress. It indicated that if the President was to lead success-

fully it must be by bringing a majority of the legislative branch into line with his purpose.

Despite a willingness on the part of a considerable number of both Houses to compromise with the executive, there was at no time the possibility of a combination that should include both the President and the extremists such as followed Sumner and Stevens. There was the will to power that defied pleasant measures. Both the President and the outstanding leaders of the war party were of such temper of mind that they naturally sought in matters of politics the atmosphere of war. Johnson's political experience and the nature of his rise to great power gave penetrating vigor to his presentation. The bitter memory of the years of agitation and denial was ever present among the leaders of the Congress who, in the outcome of the war and the absence of southern representatives, had unprecedented scope for their activities.

The issue was joined in February of 1866, when Johnson vetoed a bill providing greater powers for the Freedmen's Bureau, and cited as one of his reasons that it had been passed by a Congress in which the southern states were not represented. The congressional leaders made reply at once in a resolution to the effect that final authority in matters of reconstruction rested with Congress. Bitterness and strong language were characteristic of all participants, but President Johnson revealed most completely the true nature of the struggle for power when in an unrestrained speech from the White House he denounced the congressional leaders, their methods, and their program.

Congress had thus far checked the President in his plan of reconstruction by controlling the re-admission of states. Could the President in turn check the Congress? The first real test came when Congress, passed a bill declaring freedmen citizens, and giving them civil rights, but not the vote, and the President vetoed the bill. It was then in turn passed

over his veto. This action signalized the success of the extremists in obtaining for their program the support of all elements of the war party, at least temporarily. This is, perhaps, as important as the fact that "it opened a new chapter in constitutional practice," for the leaders were able at once to proceed with their program and in July voted to restore the first of the southern states under the congressional plan.

For some time there had been serious question of the outcome of the struggle for leadership within the dominant majority in the Congress. This having culminated in the supremacy of the more radical leaders and the subsequent triumph of the congressional plan of reconstruction, it now remained to be seen what response would be made by the electorate. For in the autumn of 1866 in the congressional elections there was a test that could not be escaped. Nor was the issue clear-cut, nor the contest on an equal basis. Whereas the leaders in the House must win a support in a contest in which their own elections were the test of strength, the President was a direct participant in this election only as his program and policy were represented by others. His term of office did not end until March three years later. Moreover, a simple majority mandate from the electorate would not bring the congressional leaders a sufficient success, nor would their plans achieve a success against presidential opposition unless the members elected to the next Congress were of a mind to follow closely the militant leadership as already exhibited in the contest with Johnson. And finally, in these elections the war party must meet the fire of the Democratic party.

Unusual efforts were made to bind local Democratic causes with that of a national organization. At the time there were but forty Democrats in the House of Representatives. These had been elected in the campaign of 1864, in which the party had declared the war a failure. Facing the necessity of retrieving their fortunes by assuming new ground as a prelim-

inary to the congressional campaign of 1866, they issued an address to the people of the United States, in which the plans for a new Democracy were foreshadowed. Even two years before, while demanding a cessation of hostilities, their convention had pledged its allegiance to the Federal Union. Now in this new appeal "National Union" was declared the watchword. This was acceptance in full of the triumph of the national armies. From this broad basis the attack of the new Democracy was leveled at those who would over-ride the Constitution. "We must maintain unimpaired the rights, the dignity, and the equality of the states, including representation in Congress and control of domestic concerns."

This was not a mild reiteration of the state rights doctrine of the ante-bellum period; it was a statement of a reconstruction principle upon which it was thought all who were opposed to the extreme measures of congressional majority might agree. At least this was the hope of the signers of this address who concluded by calling for a National Union convention "to endorse principles herein set forth." Select "wise, moderate and conservative men" to sit in this convention, was the admonition.

This emphasis on conservatism was the keynote of Democratic declarations. In 1864 their convention had said that they were "shackled with no hates, no prejudices, no passions." Thousands had felt the force of this. Against the background of congressional legislation by the triumphant Unionists, the milder tone of the Democrats now seemed even more acceptable than it had while the war was still in progress. The use of party designations was significant. In the campaign of 1864, the supporters of Lincoln had adopted the term "Unionists." As referring to those who would preserve the Union through continuance of war to success, it was apt. With the downfall of armed opposition to the federal government, the Unionists of 1864 naturally resumed the

name of Republicans. Coincidently, the remnant Democracy, hopelessly outnumbered in Congress and seeking a means brilliant enough to outshine their sentiment of 1864, chose to call a Union convention. This name, too, was apt. For at the time, in urging the more lenient policy of Johnson, they were "Unionists" in contradiction to the radical Republican majorities bent upon sectional subjection. As the campaign developed it "took on the character of a presidential canvass." Many men who had been supporters of the war administration of Lincoln, now lent their support to the proposed union convention. The convention met in Philadelphia in mid-August, and contained northern and southern Democrats, former Whigs, and some Republicans, dissatisfied with those in control of that party. Most of the delegates had been Democrats. It may be considered a Democratic meeting. Its declarations constitute the platform of the new Democracy in its first campaign, the congressional campaign of 1866. Their indorsement of President Johnson's plan of reconstruction made his administration rather than the Democratic party the object at which the former Unionists, now Republicans, directed their attacks.

The campaign opened as a debate upon the relative merits of the Presidential and the Congressional plan. President Johnson actively participated. He used the power of the patronage to advance his cause. He swung "around the circle." This tour weakened his cause and the campaign closed with the Republicans calling for the results of the war. Rhodes dates the reëmergence of the Democratic-Republican alignment after this trip and as a result of it. The Democratic party was a participant in the contest, its organization being held distinct from all who aided, and electing forty-nine members of Congress, it emerged the party opponent of the Republicans. Moreover, the repudiation of Johnson in this election removed him, as a serious opponent of the Republi-

cans, beyond the time of his office, and gave emphasis to the Democratic opposition in the legislative branch of government. The Republicans secured the election of a sufficient number of members of the House to constitute a two-thirds majority, and held it as well in the Senate. The Democratic vote was noticeably heavy in the border states. The Republican vote exceeded that cast for Lincoln in 1864 by more than 400,000.

As has been seen, there had been those who felt in the closing days of the war that parties as they had formerly existed had disappeared. Yet the campaign of 1866 had witnessed the reappearance of the names "Republican" and "Democratic." "Unionist" had held in political parlance but briefly. Yet the Democratic party, as indeed the Republican party also, was distinct from its ante-reconstruction predecessor. Not only burdened with the name that for years was to thousands synonymous with rebellion, but also weakened by the absence of states that might be expected to be Democratic, yet it sought and secured new ground on which to oppose the triumphant Republicans. Had it consented to cling to ante-bellum issues, it must have disappeared or given second place to an organization pledged to an interest in new issues. As it was, a rebirth was accomplished.

The significance of this event has been well summarized thus: "In the election of the Fortieth Congress the reconstruction question caused a new alignment of parties, the Republican organization reappearing and the Unionists of the Civil War period returning in many cases to the Democratic ranks. From this time onward the two parties, Republican and Democratic, have remained steadily opposing elements in the Congressional government of the country. Every effort to destroy either of these parties or to supplant one of them by new organization has resulted in failure."[2]

Yet, even though it continued to live, the Democratic

[2] T. C. Smith in *Cyclopædia of American Government*, 391.

party appeared to be impotent. Thorough reorganization was urged, and this, early. Even before the Fortieth Congress convened the Democracy of Ohio took up the task. Every line of the state platform of January, 1867, was the declaration of an opposition party. "States are all states": this declaration was to be expected. But the Democracy also declared: "that the people and especially those of the agricultural states, have suffered too long the exaction of high tariffs, and as the representatives of an agricultural and laboring population, we demand that their substance shall no longer be extorted from them in order to fill the pockets of eastern monopolists." Kentucky and Connecticut joined in the call of Ohio for a National Democratic Convention to meet early, preferably in 1867. Rhode Island Democrats met in March and, joining in the call, their platform added this declaration: "That frequent innovations upon our laws are pernicious, as tending to confuse the minds of the people and destroy that reverence for legal authority which is essential to the perpetuity of the State and the safety of the citizen. . . . That we regard the judiciary as the shield of the people against the unwise arbitrary acts of popular or official passion and that any attempt to weaken or over-ride the authority of the courts, or to detract from their dignity, imperils the very existence of the Republic." There were outstanding Democratic successes in the fall of 1867 in New York and Pennsylvania.

Indorsed by a vote of the electorate the Republican organization proceeded to work its will. The power of the President still stood across the path of their full success. A bill limiting his power of removal was passed. His violation of this Tenure of Office act gave the pretext for impeachment, although there was earlier talk of it and other charges were made. The impeachment was not voted until February of 1868 and the trial in the Senate continued until the middle of May, when he was acquitted. Failure to command the vote

of all Republicans in the Senate led to this result.[3] But the long struggle with Johnson had placed the radical Republicans firmly in power in the party organization. They dominated the convention which now nominated General Grant for the Presidency.

The Democratic National Convention met on July 4, 1868, in New York City. There were five candidates of prominence. President Johnson received 65 votes on the first ballot, yet even this support reflected greater sentiment than could have been genuinely favorable to his candidacy. General W. S. Hancock, late in charge of the New Orleans Department, attracted attention because of military reputation. T. A. Hendricks of Indiana, much more than a favorite son, gained increasing support after the convention met. Ohio was represented by two candidates, S. P. Chase, former Senator, and governor of Ohio, member of Lincoln's cabinet and now Chief Justice, and G. H. Pendleton, long representative in Congress and late candidate for governor of Ohio. Twenty-one ballots were taken without any candidate securing the necessary two-thirds vote, although Pendleton received within three votes of a majority on the sixteenth ballot. On the fifth day and the twenty-second ballot, the convention gave a unanimous nomination to the permanent chairman, Horatio M. Seymour, who, after vainly protesting and having prevented a nomination earlier, accepted resignedly. Seymour, says Rhodes, was "their best man." "Ability, breeding, character, were each conspicuous." He had been elected governor of New York in 1852 and again in 1862, and as governor aided the Federal government in suppression of draft riots in New York City. Yet he had disagreed with Lincoln, and was widely known for his opposition.

Weaker than their candidate, as against the popularity of Grant, was the Democratic declaration, favorable to the

[3] D. M. Dewitt, *The Impeachment and Trial of Andrew Johnson.*

retention of greenbacks as a permanent element in the currency. This "Ohio idea" ably urged by Pendleton, had been incorporated in the platform before the nomination. Seymour repudiated the plank. His stand enabled him to carry New York and New Jersey in November. His running mate was Francis Blair of Missouri, who had distinguished himself by bitter denunciation of the reconstruction policy of Congress. His violence lent color to the charges of Republicans that the Democracy would undo the results of the war. The platform of the Democrats had been drawn to raise other questions to prominence. In addition to the "money question" just referred to, the party demanded "a tariff for revenue upon foreign imports and such equal taxation under the internal revenue laws as will afford incidental protection to domestic manufactures." Also, adopted from the floor of convention was the declaration: "That this convention sympathizes cordially with the workingmen of the United States in their efforts to protect the rights and interests of the laboring classes of the country."

Democratic leaders anticipated success as possible, although in retrospect it is difficult to see how they could have done so. Seymour carried New York, New Jersey, Oregon, Georgia, Louisiana, Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky, and polled 2,709,-543 votes. The vote was close in California, Connecticut and Indiana. Rhodes points out that had Seymour secured the votes of all the slave-holding states that were Democratic from 1880–1892, he would have been elected. As it was, Grant had carried eight southern states because of the disfranchisement of former Confederates.

For the Democracy to poll within 300,000 votes of the victor and to make a minority showing in every state, indicated that it had the strength of powerful opposition. In Congress there were to be eleven Democrats in the Senate and sixty-three in the House.

The questions involved in reconstruction had served to bring about an alignment of political parties and the outcome of this election of 1868 completed the triumph of the radicals within the Republican party. They were in complete control of the government.[4] Meanwhile, other questions were pressing for a solution, and officials and parties had already felt the necessity of taking position upon them, or of appearing to do so. Most of these new problems were economic, including, notably, the retirement of paper currency, the disposition of public lands, and the regulation of public utilities. These were not matters upon which party declarations had been fixed, nor were they in such form as to give party organizations unquestioned place. A considerable agitation was necessary to reveal the currents of public opinion before party declaration and the action of party leaders could be expected to furnish guides for party voters.

In the decade, 1866–1876, the Republican party membership in Congress and in party conventions continued to be seriously divided upon the major questions before the people. But the call upon the electorate to keep the war party in office enabled the Republican organization to hold control of the House until the mid-term elections of 1874. By that time two factions within the leadership of the party were well marked. One included Conkling, Cameron, Logan and Morton, and the other, Blaine, Sherman, Garfield and Hoar. They did not differ, as some of them did later, upon matters of principle, or even on party program; they disagreed as to party policy, and most of all they fought for dominance in the councils of the party.

Another type of disagreement now raised its head. The control of patronage by a powerful and aggressive party organization had led to widespread corruption and graft. The aftermath of the war tension gave increased scope to the ma-

---

[4] Cf. Henry Adams, "The Session, 1869–1870," in *North American Review*, CVIII, 610.

nipulators of party machinery. Professor Farrand has well said that "The war also affected politics through the acceptance of military standards, of subordination to leaders, of implicit obedience, and with little inclination to question methods, provided quick action and speedy results were achieved." [5] It was only a matter of time when reformation of these conditions would excite the interest of some members of the war party. A reform of the civil service was proposed, and an increasing number of the younger members of the party found in its advocacy a task pleasing to their interest. The membership of the party in office divided upon the issue, but, as was to be expected, the organization leaders felt that here was no fit subject for party disagreement, nor did they admit that the dominant party was in need of reformation. Thus the dominant party gradually revealed three distinct groups of leaders. These were termed the Stalwarts, the Half-Breeds, and the Independents. The character of the last named group is sufficiently indicated by its title. It varied greatly in numbers and personnel, and was fed from time to time by recruits from the other two groups. Its outstanding interest was in measures of political reform. It cannot be said that, as independents of a later period, they were greatly interested in a more widespread democracy, or in a reformation of economic abuses; they declared an overwhelming interest in making party organization responsive to the will of those of the electorate who expressed the party faith. It was largely a matter of self-government, and of efficient government. As for the other two groups, "There was no definite body of political beliefs which made one who held them either a Stalwart or a Half-Breed. Each group was made up of individuals with widely divergent views and abilities, who merely acted together for partizan purposes." [6]

[5] Max Farrand, *The Development of the United States*, 277.
[6] H. C. Thomas, *Return of the Democratic Party to Power*, 34.

These developments in party politics tended to make clearer then ever before the difference between the party voters and the party organization. The lines became clearer because of the dissent of an increasing body of voters, not on matters of party dogma, but upon some of the newer questions upon which the official party position was unknown or uncertain, and, most of all, upon the conduct of men in office. Of course party organization was identified with this conduct, whether it was efficient or not, corrupt or not. The voter who called himself a member of a party could protest, even on election day, but the organization must appear to pursue a consistent and traditional course.

The growing sense of the distinction between the voters of a party and the members of the organization of that party led not only to the attempt to increase votes of insurgents on election day, but also to the introduction into politics of organizations designed to further the program of insurgents in office. Protestants against party rule were not new phenomena, but it was universally recognized now that any possible permanent success in politics involved more than a convention of protest, more than the threat of withholding an expected vote on election day, and more than an independent candidacy. Party ruled in the United States in the sense that those in charge of party organization controlled all the avenues of successful accomplishment.

The recognition that there was no hope of securing control of the Republican party organization, or, indeed, of influencing it to any practical degree, led to the meeting of the exponents of various elements of dissatisfaction in May of 1872 and their organization of a party of protest.[7] Their convention was a mass meeting and included such men as Carl Schurz, Whitelaw Reid, and Henry Watterson. Tariff reform interested some of the delegates; a more lenient attitude toward

[7] E. D. Ross, *The Liberal Republican Movement.*

the South had already led to the success of some of the members in Missouri; but the reason for the presence of most of the delegates was disgust at the corruption rife in public life, and the hope that reform of the civil service could be accomplished through the agency of this new party.

The platform was a reflection of the dominant reason for its existence. It denounced the conduct of government during the Grant administration. It nominated for the Presidency Horace Greeley, long editor of the New York Tribune.

Meanwhile the Democratic party had continued to exist, and was of course to have a part in this presidential campaign. As a result of the congressional election of 1870, it had greatly increased its membership in the House. The increase of dissent within the Republican party increased the chance of a Democratic victory. But the organization of the Liberal Republicans as a separate party, and their nomination of a candidate, took from the Democrats the best hope of benefit, unless a coalition with the Liberal Republicans could be effected. Obviously, such a coalition could be only for purposes of winning the election. There was no other reason. The Democratic convention at Baltimore adopted the platform and candidates of the Liberal Republicans.

Had Greeley been elected, presented as he was by such a combination of factors, a most interesting party development must have followed his inauguration. Quite apart from the factor of his unusual personality, a party council which must include at the outset representatives of the various elements that united in his support was foredoomed to be the scene of a savage and devastating fight for power. In the end, some group must have assumed and exercised the power that by this time was inseparable from the position of party control in the United States. The election of such a candidate as Greeley, or the election of any candidate by such a means of

coalition, was not a conclusive act; it merely arranged the factors for an inevitable struggle.

But Grant was reëlected. By that indorsement the electorate retained in the seats of power the strong party organization which had failed as yet to develop a party program to meet the needs of the new day. It had contented itself with insisting upon the supreme importance of retaining the war party in power; had sounded the battle-cry thus: "We believe that the modest patriotism, the earnest purpose, the sound judgment, the practical wisdom, the incorruptible integrity, and illustrious services of U. S. Grant have commended him to the heart of the American people, and with him at our head we start to-day upon a new march to victory." The victory was overwhelming. The majority of Grant was 750,000, Greeley carrying only seven states, all of them in the South or border area.

Yet there were realists in politics who knew that the political character of the two candidates was excellent evidence of the beginning of a realignment. It was pointed out that Greeley was the Democratic candidate, despite his long and energetic service as a Republican, and that Grant had been a Democrat, if anything, prior to 1868. John Sherman, referring to this, said, "The Republicans are running a Democrat, and the Democrats, a Republican, and there is not an essential difference in the platform of principles." But the electorate in voting chose to continue in power the party organization which had ruled since 1865.

The period of the second administration of Grant (1873–1877) witnessed a growth in the general distrust of government officials. It was true, not only of the national government, but also of state and city and county government. Widespread corruption of public officials and the outrageous disregard of law and of human life tended more and more to emphasize the need of other agencies for accomplishing good

government. The political parties whose representatives ruled the nation were naturally the targets of those who wished to accomplish the reform. Party organization came to be synonymous with self-seeking and cowardice. The outcome of the tendencies toward reform in 1872 had not eliminated the ever-existent hope that resided in recourse to a new organization. Yet so powerful was the hold of party tradition, and so great the inertia of the mass of voters, that the older organizations held their sway despite all opposition.

It was the Democratic party that presented everywhere candidates in opposition to the Republicans in the autumn of 1874. The result of the congressional elections brought a majority of 70 to the Democrats in the House for the session that opened in 1875. Thus, ten years after the close of the war, when the Democrats had but a handful in the House, they were raised to an equality of legislative power with the hitherto triumphant Republican party. Unquestionably, the hard times of the period brought much of this result. It was without reason that the Democrats should benefit so overwhelmingly from the reaction against corrupt and inefficient government. For the Democratic party, despite its protestations, was not a reform organization.

The Democrats retained a majority in the House for the next six years, thus curbing the legislative program of the Republicans during the second half of the Grant administration and throughout the administration of Hayes. This gave them a rostrum from which, not only to charge the dominant party with corruption and mal-administration, but to develop a greater attention to the new issues that pressed for a consideration. In this process, as the opposition party, it had the advantage, yet it was revealed that the members of the Democratic party in office were far from agreement upon economic issues. But the cry of reform distracted attention

from these inconsistencies, as the cry for the results of the war still continued to do for the bulk of Republicans.

The support of the Republican party by the great financial interests of the country added point to the charge of their opponents that the party of Lincoln was no longer the party of the plain people. The policy of that party in adhering to a protective tariff and in providing for a resumption of specie payments strengthened the view. Yet no such economic basis would explain the hold of the Republican organization. Their appeal was broader than that. The party of the Homestead Act of 1862 and the Pacific Railway Acts of 1862 and 1864, was a party that continued to appeal to a great mass of well-to-do business men and farmers, because it appeared to meet their economic needs. And the expansion of the years 1867–1873 gave great scope to the energies of the business man in politics.

But influenced though they may have been by economic circumstances, the activities of most of those who would alter the prevailing state of affairs continued to be directed upon the administration. There were exceptions. Indeed, a labor reform party had met in convention and nominated a candidate in 1872. In 1876 representatives of farmers, anti-monopoly organizations, and of laborers came together in convention and launched a national party pledged to a retention of greenbacks.[8] Here was an economic issue upon which both Republican and Democratic parties were seriously divided. Moreover particular interests within the electorate expressed this protest, and their strength was in states of the West.

A lively appreciation of the causes for the failure of the reformers in 1872 led a considerable group of Republicans early in 1876 to launch a movement to affect the choice of a nominee. Much of the inadequacy of government and the strength of the machine politician was believed to reside in

[8] F. E. Haynes, *Third Party Movements since the Civil War.*

the character of the nominal leaders. Corruption was felt to be inseparable from the spoils system, and it was resolved to support no presidential aspirant not known to possess the courage and resolution to attack the abuses which had acquired the strength of established custom. This was an acceptance of party organization, but a demand for leadership.

The question of leadership was settled in the party convention that met at Cincinnati in June. The possibility of the renomination of Grant had long since disappeared. Morton and Conkling were candidates and both represented the Stalwart tradition. Blaine was the candidate of the Half-Breeds. Bristow was favored by the independent element. The vote was so distributed that none had a majority, although Blaine had 308 on one of the ballots. Upon the withdrawal of Morton and Bristow, the contest closed with the nomination of Hayes, who had had sixty-one votes on the first ballot. The platform was again a call to the colors to support the results of the war, inasmuch as the Democratic party was termed the party of rebellion and treason. The party organization with Zachariah Chandler in charge of the national committee was in the hands of the Stalwarts.

From the first, Hayes proved an effective candidate. His political career had been marked by independence and courage. In his acceptance speech he stressed the need of conciliation in the matters of reconstruction, and he called for reform in the civil service. This declaration won the confidence of the independents. Had it not been for his subsequent action, such declarations might be grouped with others that have meant little when put to the test of practice. But in the campaign, as later, he asserted an independence of other party leaders and a belief in a need of reform of party practice that introduced a new factor into the inner councils of the dominant party. Yet he coöperated with the national committee.

Reform was the cry of the Democratic party when it met

in convention. It was the obvious issue for them, and Samuel J. Tilden, who became the nominee, was known as a reformer. Moreover, his career in New York had revealed an energetic and resourceful party leader. He had been governor, and for the period his had been an economical and efficient administration. That he had served as a corporation lawyer, that he had shown himself a hard money man, and was himself a man of wealth, made him acceptable to those business interests which were not satisfied with the Republican organization. There was protest from the Tammany adherents but it had, as usual, reasons of a local character. Yet democratic misgivings at this nomination were natural.

The campaign closed with an unusual amount of uncertainty. This increased, as the result of the poll revealed that, although Tilden had a majority of the popular vote, even by the figures of the opposition, he had only 184 electoral votes, whereas Hayes, were he to secure all that were his upon the face of the official returns, had 185. Because of the disputed returns, Congress created an Electoral Commission to pass upon the matter. Its membership was to comprise five Senators, five Representatives and five Justices of the Supreme Court. This resulted in an alignment of eight Republicans and seven Democrats.[9] Its decision, accepting in every case the returns favorable to Hayes, furnished the basis for the counting of votes in the Senate to the result that declared Hayes elected. Thus, a man of independence of mind in matters of politics took the oath of office on Monday, March 5, 1877, and a new era in party history was inaugurated.

### BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

For general political background see: W. A. Dunning, *Reconstruction, Political and Economic* (1907); J. F. Rhodes, *History of the United States*, V, VI, VII (1904, 1906); E. P. Oberholtzer,

[9] See P. L. Haworth, *The Hayes-Tilden Disputed Presidential Election of 1876.*

*History of the United States*, I, II (1917); James Schouler, *History of the United States*, VII (1913). See also Horace White, *Life of Lyman Trumbull* (1913); J. A. Woodburn, *Life of Thaddeus Stevens* (1913).

Portions of the following books of a general political character: F. L. Paxson, *The New Nation* (1919); P. L. Haworth, *The United States in Our Own Times* (1920); C. R. Lingley, *Since the Civil War* (1921).

Special studies include: C. R. Fish, *Civil Service and the Patronage* (1905); H. M. Dilla, *The Politics of Michigan, 1865–1878* (1912); D. M. Dewitt, *The Impeachment and Trial of Andrew Johnson* (1903); F. E. Haynes, *Third Party Movements since the Civil War* (1916); E. D. Ross, *The Liberal Republican Movement* (1919); P. L. Haworth, *The Hayes-Tilden Election of 1876* (1906).

Special articles: J. M. Callahan, "Political Parties in the South since 1860," in *The South in the Building of the Nation*, IV, 627; W. A. Dunning, "More Light on Andrew Johnson," in *American Historical Review*, XI, 574; Henry Adams, "The Session, 1869–1870" in *The North American Review*, CVIII, 610, CXI, 29; E. B. Greene, "Politics in the Middle West (1860–72)," in *Wisconsin Historical Society Preceedings* (1911), 60; S. J. Buck, "Independent Parties in the Western States (1873–1876), in *Turner Essays in American History*, 137.

The Republican view of developments in Congress: J. G. Blaine, *Twenty Years of Congress* (1884–1886).

" . . . continuous association and effort on the part of a great number of men for the accomplishment of a common purpose through a continuous series of political struggles of course involves continuous organization, for the work of a great number of men for a common purpose through a long period of time cannot be carried on at all without organization. These continuous, voluntary, organized associations to secure the adoption of policies upon which their members agree and the choice of officers who will represent those policies are what we call political parties."

ELIHU ROOT, *Government and Citizenship*, 30.

# CHAPTER XI

## STRUGGLE FOR THE CONTROL OF PARTY

The position and purpose of Hayes—The fight for party control—The Democratic use of opportunity—The call for Greenbacks—The silver movement—Organization plans for 1880—The outcome in the Republican convention—The Democratic appeal—The position of radicals—The fight for control in Garfield's administration—The succession of Arthur—Power of party in 1882—Rising tide of reform—Democratic uncertainty—Nomination of Blaine—Selection of Cleveland—Power of Independents—The campaign—Election of the Democratic candidate.

IN the course of the contest over the disputed returns party lines had been tightened, and powerful party organization had never seemed more important. The outcome of the elections had continued a Republican majority in the Senate, and a Democratic majority in the House. The narrow margin of victory in the presidential contest, and the unusual process by which the uncertain result had been resolved, placed each party organization in an expectant frame of mind. Party advantage seemed a precious thing; to the Democrats who had been within reach of a long awaited opportunity, to the Republicans who had grasped victory from so unfavorable a showing before the electorate.

The Republican leaders found at once that the President intended to pursue an independent course. He intended to use the powers of the great office to carry forward policies which appealed to him or to those who advised with him. An indication of his point of view appeared in the words of the inaugural, "He serves his party best who serves the country best." It was soon evident that Hayes would judge for himself. He considered it a proper step to gather about him a group of men in cabinet, who represented not only various

elements within the party membership, but some of whom might be said to represent forces antagonistic to the existent Republican party organization. The party organization in the Senate made confirmation of these appointments a test of party power, and were defeated. "Taken all together," said Professor Burgess in 1915, "this cabinet was the strongest body of men . . . that ever sat around the council table of a President of the United States."[1]

Resolved upon a positive course of action, Hayes naturally attacked first of all the question presented by the promise of withdrawal of troops from the southern states. It rested within his power to order the withdrawal, and thus by executive act to bring to an end the last vestige of congressional reconstruction. It was his position that it was not "the duty of the President to use the military power of the nation to decide contested elections in the States." He provided, however, for investigation of conditions in South Carolina and Louisiana, summoning the rival governors of South Carolina to Washington, and sending a commission of investigation to Louisiana. Upon the basis of these findings, Hayes ordered the troops to be withdrawn. Of course Republican officials in these states passed from power.

The action of the President was bitterly denounced by William Lloyd Garrison and Wendell Phillips, as was to be expected. More significant were the attacks made by such party leaders as Blaine and Wade. The bitterness was not surprising in that the action of the President struck at an important source of party strength; one that the party organization had found of unusual value to them. But the President's action was a recognition of an actual fact. Between 1869 and 1877 every southern state which had seceded turned to the Democrats, and in 1877 there were in Congress only six Republicans from those states.

[1] J. W. Burgess, *Administration of President Hayes*, 65.

Hayes wrote in his diary at this point, "Now for civil service reform." He could point out that the party convention in 1876 had committed itself to reform, but he knew not only that the spoils system was "the government as then constituted," but also that the leaders in control of the Republican organization, which in turn dominated the membership of that party in Congress, had no intention of altering the situation in any important degree. Notwithstanding this appreciation, however, in successive messages Hayes called upon Congress to provide means for reform. This helped to keep the matter before those who were convinced that the system could only be altered by thorough-going legislation, and it emphasized the inaction of Congress.

But his conception of leadership included more than recommendation. There was much that lay within his power, even though party leaders could continue to muster greater and greater strength against him than at the outset of his administration. The pathway of achievement was that offered by the President's power of appointment and removal. His spirit was revealed in his statement that "party leaders should have no more influence in appointments than other equally respectable citizens,"[2] and his order that office-holders were not to participate in party management.

The President was forced to fight for these general principles. The Senate majority responding to the leadership of Conkling opposed the President's power of removal, notably in the case of Chester A. Arthur, collector of the Port of New York, and A. B. Cornell, naval officer at the same port, both of whom investigation had shown to be guilty of great political activity. Moreover, in the case of a series of important presidential appointments, the party organization in the Senate was able for a time to prevent confirmation. The President provided recess appointments, and continued to persist in his

[2] Cited by Rhodes, *History of the United States*, VIII, 13.

stand. His experience led him to write that "there can be no complete and permanent reform of the civil service until public opinion emancipates congressmen from all control and influence over government patronage."

The independent stand of Hayes led George W. Curtis to write that the great service of the President was to show that reform was "perfectly practicable." But it became more and more evident that Hayes was not a party leader. No group was formed in Congress to support him. The continual opposition, not only of the Republican organization, but also of many men long prominent in the public eye, gradually weakened his hold upon the public.

His position was increasingly difficult after the mid-term elections. In this campaign (1878) the Republican congressional committee had systematized the appeal to office holders, and by a forced assessment raised approximately $100,000 from them. The Democrats as the minority had bent most of their party effort to discrediting their opponents by providing a congressional investigation of the charges of fraud in the elections of 1876. But the work of the Potter committee, organized in May of 1878, widened until it included investigation of the methods of the Democratic organization as well. This resulted in discrediting the pretensions of the Democratic politicians, and in casting reasonable doubt upon the character of Tilden as a "reform candidate." Despite this fact, and the greater awareness of an increasing body of independents, the Democrats had swept the country in 1878, securing a safe majority in both houses of Congress, and now proceeded to make the best of their opportunity.

There appeared in the new Congress thirteen representatives who termed themselves Greenbackers, and who came within a few votes of holding the balance of power between the Democratic and Republican membership. As their name implied, they considered the matter of increase of paper cur-

rency of primary importance. This belief was held by a considerable number of the members elected as Democrats or as Republicans, but neither party, as a national organization, had taken such a position in its declarations of 1876, nor showed a willingness to take up the project in 1878. Early in that year delegations from twenty-eight states met in Toledo, Ohio, and effected a union of adherents of the Labor Reform and Greenback parties, organizations already in existence. The resultant party was known as Greenback Labor. A million votes were cast for their candidates in 1878. This was but one of the evidences of a widespread discontent, which tended more and more to consider "currency reform" as a remedy for economic discomfort.

The more important factors in this party situation had been revealed prior to the mid-term elections in the congressional consideration of the silver question. There had been a demand for the free and unlimited coinage of silver. A bill providing for "the legal equality of silver with gold" passed the House with a bi-partisan vote. In the Senate, amended to direct "the Secretary of the Treasury to buy each month from two million dollars worth to four million dollars worth and to coin it into silver dollars," it passed. Hayes had vetoed the bill, but it had been passed over his veto, and had become a law February 28, 1878. The demand for an increased volume of greenbacks was closely associated with this silver movement. It, too, was bi-partisan. So too, was the demand for a repeal of the bill providing for a resumption of specie payments. Against these proposals Hayes used his power, as did a considerable number of the leaders of the Republican organization. But it is difficult to see how the unqualified assertion that the work for "sound finance" was to the credit of the Republican party, can be sustained.

Indeed, the activities of Congress seemed again and again to reveal that the legislative membership of both parties was

divided upon all of the important questions before the public, despite declarations in party platforms upon some of the questions. "It is not surprising," wrote the editor of the *Nation*, "that neither party should have steadily supported or opposed the Administration. It has been helped and hindered by both indiscriminately."

The party situation during the second half of the Hayes Administration was even more perplexing. The Democratic control of Congress led to an attempt to coerce the President by a refusal to vote appropriations until he agreed to a repeal of the Federal Election laws. In this contest the President won, and though the attempt brought discredit upon the Democratic organization, it can hardly be said that the Republican organization had proper share in the victory of a President whom they had long since repudiated. It was a victory most of all for the principle of executive independence.

In threatening, as they said, to stop the wheels of government, the Democrats gave plausibility to the charge that they were still champions of state sovereignty rather than upholders of the Union. This method of attack by Democratic congressional leaders, added to the unexpected outcome of the Potter investigation, served to recall an expressed hope of General Grant in 1877 that before the next presidential election, "The Democracy will do some foolish thing" in order to consolidate the Republicans.

It may be said in conclusion that, as a leader, Hayes was successful to the extent that his opportunity was one for executive action, either appointment, order, or veto. This leads to the eulogy of him as having put all internal problems in a way of solution. Yet as a leader of a party, either in Congress, or in the smaller group of party managers, he was a failure from the outset—and to the end.

Ten months after leaving the Presidency, Hayes wrote in

his diary, "The Administration [his] came in with the Republican party discordant, disheartened, and weak. When the Administration closed, the party was united, strong, confident and victorious." [3] There was a modicum of accuracy in this summary, yet the examination of the party alignment in the election of 1880 reveals a chaotic condition, whether measured by issues, persons, or sections. That Hayes was not a candidate for reëlection served to make the preliminary canvass within the Republican party one in which the alignment was but slightly influenced by the events of his administration. It was again the struggle between two factions for control of the party machinery, with the reformers playing a third and less important rôle, as they had in the two previous campaigns.

At a meeting of the Republican National Committee held in Washington in December of 1879, J. D. Cameron became chairman. This was a victory for the group of leaders, including Conkling and Logan, who had already launched a campaign "of much skill and little scruple" for the renomination of Grant. Already the two powerful weapons in opposition were seen to be the anti-third term tradition and the distaste of the public for the scandals of the two administrations of Grant. Yet the hold of Cameron and Conkling was such in their respective state conventions that before the first of March a considerable number of Grant delegates had been chosen.

Meanwhile, the anti-third term plank became the special property of the group within the party who were identified as independents. A convention was called and met in St. Louis early in May, and received indications of support in all parts of the country, delegations being present from thirteen states. How far were these members of the party tradition from the regular party chieftains in their conception of party formation may be judged from their provision for a committee of one

[3] Cited in C. R. Williams, *Life of Rutherford B. Hayes*, II, 227.

hundred to be instructed to meet in New York if Grant were nominated and "to take such action as seemed best."

For such as these, Conkling had a resolution when the convention met in Chicago on June second. The resolution declared it to be "the sense of this convention, that every member of it is bound to support its nominee, whoever the nominee may be, and that no man should hold his seat here who is not ready to agree." The demand for party regularity, so insistent a part of party creed, was completely mirrored in this proposal of Conkling, but its adoption by practically a unanimous vote indicated that it was accepted as a gesture preliminary to the forthcoming battle, and that in no sense could it be expected to have a binding effect.

A second indication of the extent to which a party machine was willing to go was found in the proposal that the unit rule be used in all ballotings by states. This had been the practice. But the application of such a rule in this convention would have increased the vote for Grant in several states, including New York, Pennsylvania and Illinois, and assured him the nomination. This rule was not reported by the chairman of the committee on rules, and when proposed as a minority report it was defeated. A union of anti-Grant forces accomplished this result. James A. Garfield led in it, and George F. Hoar was chosen temporary chairman of the convention.

The balloting brought forth as candidates Blaine. Sherman, Edmunds. F. B. Washburne, and William Windom. as well as Grant, who led on all votes up to and including the 35th. On the 36th ballot all of the anti-Grant votes except fifty were cast for Garfield, and he was nominated. Garfield had been the convention manager for Sherman, was a member of Half-Breed faction, and it had been the votes of Blaine which had led the way to his nomination.

The platform contained a warm eulogy of Rutherford B. Hayes, but it was not until a resolution was proposed from

the floor that the convention went on record in favor of "thorough, radical and complete" reform of the civil service. The same resolution called attention to the need of the coöperation of the legislature and executive departments of the government. However, the same body of men nominated for the Vice-Presidency, Chester A. Arthur of New York, in an expressed desire to placate the Stalwart faction, and to earn the active support of their leader, Senator Conkling.

The Democratic convention met in Cincinnati late in June. Its action could not be surely anticipated. There had been a strong current of sentiment in favor of the renomination of Tilden which still persisted, but was lessened in force. The revelations of the Potter committee had had their influence; Tilden's own attitude was uncertain, as was his health; and there was also the united and bitter opposition of the Tammany element in the Democratic party. Nineteen men received votes for the Presidency on the first ballot. Ten of these were men of national prominence, most of them because of service in Congress or as state governor. The chief contenders were Thomas F. Bayard of Delaware and Winfield Scott Hancock. The latter was nominated with practical unanimity after the second ballot gave him nearly three times the vote of Bayard. A former Congressman, William H. English of Indiana, was nominated for the Vice-Presidency.

The scattered votes as well as the nomination of a military leader indicated the lack of a powerful party machine, or of an outstanding political leader. Hancock's service in the Union army, particularly his service at Gettysburg, made him a strong candidate to meet charges of disloyalty to the Union. However, this benefit was limited in appeal among those who were of the radical Republican tradition, for he had shown by his conduct of the office of military commander in the Department of Louisiana and Texas that he did not sympathize with congressional reconstruction, while his orders

placing civil above military law were the means of making him unusually acceptable to the Democrats of the South, from whom must come the bulk of his electoral votes.

The Democratic party in the South was exhibiting symptoms of a fundamental change in political alignment. Party power was passing into the hands of men whose interest in party spoils was greater than that of the wealthier leaders who had preceded them. It was they who set about in these years to destroy the Republican party of the South by accomplishing the disfranchisement of the negro voters. The struggle for power within the Democratic party was bitter, notably in Virginia. It was in large measure a social alignment, between the aristocratic forces of the old régime strengthened by some capitalistic interest, and the democratic forces which in the years 1865–1885 came more and more to control the party machinery. The successful leader in Virginia was Mahone, who built up a powerful machine, and who exercised great personal power, notwithstanding his call for "the will of the people."[4]

The Democratic platform declared the party to be "the friend of labor and of the laboring man," and the Republican convention asked that tariff duties be arranged in a way to favor the American laborer. But however much either of them appealed to the great mass of laborers, they met in no way the need of those who wished an aggressive policy for the benefit of laboring interests. A Greenback Labor conference was held in Washington early in the year, and in June a national convention was held in Chicago. It was well attended, and included delegates of a Socialist Labor group as well. The declarations on currency are of less importance in this survey than the view of agencies for popular control of government. The stated justification for the new party was the failure of the old parties to curb private economic power. In November

[4] See in particular, C. C. Pearson, *The Readjustor Movement in Virginia.*

more than 300,000 votes were cast for their candidate, James B. Weaver of Iowa.

The Democrats made much of the charges of "unsavory financial dealings" against the Republican candidate. But these charges had long been known, and his constituents in Ohio, as well as the national convention, had given them their best answer. Moreover, as Carl Schurz declared, the support of the nominee by the Independents was conclusive evidence that Garfield was accepted as a man of upright character, incapable of a dishonest act. The Republicans continued to wave the "Bloody Shirt," supplementing it with attacks upon the "Solid South" as it now existed. But the argument of protection of business interests occupied more and more attention. There was thought to be danger in the Democratic promise of tariff revision. An appreciation of this appeared in Hancock's famous statement that "the manufacturing or industrial interests of the country will have as much protection under a Democratic administration," and "the tariff is a local question." Garfield insisted also that there was fear that adverse financial legislation would result from Democratic control.

The race between Garfield and Hancock was close, the former having less than ten thousand more votes than the Democratic candidate. The electorate had preferred one former Union officer to another, and given control to a Republican organization. Each candidate carried nineteen states, but outside of the former slave states, Hancock had only California, Nevada and New Jersey, thus losing the more populous states of the East, including New York, which the Democrats had felt sure of carrying, as they had done four years before.

The result of the congressional elections gave a Republican majority in the incoming House. Although there appeared to be an even division of the membership in the new Senate, the working agreement already made between Cameron, the

National Republican chairman, and Mahone, the newly elected Independent Democrat from Virginia, assured Republican control of the Upper House.

Despite the lack of a great issue between the parties, a large vote was cast. Figures have been presented to show that five sixths of the possible vote was registered in this presidential election. Professor Hart concludes that "there is not another country in the world which has ever exhibited so large a proportion of the actual voters as the United States."[5] Moreover, this great body of voters, which had been steadily increasing in size was, except less than four per cent of it, sufficiently satisfied with the two great parties to vote for one or the other of the two candidates.

Every one experienced in politics saw that the election of Garfield made certain a struggle for power within the administration. No one anticipated such an independent course as had been pursued by Hayes. As Garfield was of the Half-Breed faction, the extent of the influence of the Stalwarts was merely a matter of conjecture. Conkling had supported the ticket. Grant had spoken on behalf of Garfield. The Republican machine in those states dominated by men of Stalwart persuasion had, of course, preferred Garfield to Hancock. And Garfield had coöperated. The result of the election merely narrowed the struggle for power to those who held office as Republicans, or who were recognized as members of the Republican organization.

The men whom Garfield brought into his cabinet were not of one faction. Blaine held the office of Secretary of State, and was looked upon as master of the situation. But both the Postmaster-General and the Secretary of War were Stalwarts, and Wayne MacVeagh, who became Attorney-General, was an Independent.

[5] A. B. Hart, "The Exercise of the Suffrage," *Political Science Quarterly,* VII, 315.

Yet, as the administration opened, it was clear that in the all important matter of patronage, the Half-Breeds, and particularly Blaine, were in control, and that the President intended to defy Conkling. This he did pointedly in the matter of the New York appointments, naming as Collector of the Port of New York William H. Robertson, a long-time opponent of Conkling. The Senate sustained the President, despite the objections of Conkling, and both he and his colleague, Thomas C. Platt, resigned in protest, anticipating a vote of approval from the Legislature of New York, which event proved not forthcoming. The breach between the two factions widened.

Chester A. Arthur had been elected Vice-President, but had no influence in the administration of Garfield. Yet, as Vice-President, he was the most conspicuous Stalwart in public office, and the relationship of his office to that of President led to the use of the term, "Prince of Wales" party, as applied to the Stalwart faction; an unpleasant suggestion at best, but one not lacking in accuracy as applied either to the state of the public mind toward this struggle for power, or to the obvious method by which the great power residing in the office of President might pass from one faction to another. That a people given to boasting about the "popular will" should accept without protest this manifestation of "rule by leaders" was indicative of the strength of the party tradition and of the general apathy.

The shooting of Garfield in early July closed his brief period of power. Blaine exercised the necessary duties of office until the death of Garfield in September caused Arthur to take the oath of office as President. He asked the members of the cabinet to remain for a time, then chose a new cabinet, retaining but one member, and he a Stalwart. Blaine passed from power.

When the Congress convened in December, the Republican

membership had control of both houses for the first time since 1875. The message of the President was accorded general approval. There was, however, no definitive party program to be drawn therefrom, nor did the Republican majorities provide one, either on the matters considered in the message, or otherwise. Indeed, the party membership was divided upon the treatment of the tariff, as it had been, and was, in the matter of currency "reform." The only partizan vote of the session was upon a bill to extend the charters of national banks.

It should be noted that this Congress passed a bill providing for a Civil Service Commission, and that Arthur signed the bill. He had pointed out in his message of 1882 that members of both parties seemed to favor it. The vote showed this as true, although the bulk of open opposition came from Democrats. The law provided for competitive examinations open to all applicants. By the end of the year (1883) the system was in operation in certain departments in Washington, in eleven of the customs districts, and in the larger post-offices. Rhodes states that at the close of the Arthur administration, more than 15,000 were in the classified service. This accomplishment was a measurable satisfaction of a public demand. Yet how slight it was when considered beside the words of the editor of the *Nation* in December of 1881, when he said, "The only safe course for any administration under present state of public sentiment is to treat the offices of the government as places of work, trust, and responsibility."

In the meantime, the electorate had gone to the polls in the congressional election of 1882. That the managers of party organization had not lost their sense of reality may be judged from the appeal sent to those who had failed to contribute to the party funds: "Great political battles cannot be won in this way. . . . We are on the skirmish line of 1884. Unless you think that our grand old party ought not to succeed, help it now. . . ." The outcome of the congressional elec-

tion was an overwhelming defeat for the Republicans, the Democrats gaining seventy-one seats.  Considering the lack of unity in Republican leadership, and the fact that the Democratic party was the most powerful opposing organization, the result was to be expected.

Throughout the country, and in elections other than congressional, the Democratic organization appeared to be increasing its opportunities.  In nine normally Republican states Democrats were elected to the governorship.  In New York, Grover Cleveland was elected governor, chiefly because of the divisions within the Republican party membership.

On a national scale, the Democratic party membership was revealed as divided and of uncertain mind, when the Congress, with a Democratic majority in the House, convened in December of 1883.  Instead of reëlecting S. J. Randall of Pennsylvania, who had been speaker for six years, 1875-1881, the Democrats chose J. G. Carlisle of Kentucky.  This choice was an indication that the Democratic majority proposed to deal with the matter of revision of the tariff, for Randall was a protectionist.  From the committee on Ways and Means came a Democratic proposal of definite and measurable character.

Democratic platforms had long talked of a needed revision of the tariff, had in 1880 called for "tariff for revenue only," and now, despite a division in the party membership in the House, the leaders attempted to make it a test of party responsibility.  It was the only strictly partizan legislation that they did propose.  But the preliminary votes showed that the tariff caused sectional as well as party divisions.  Even though in caucus the Democratic bill was given a two thirds vote, yet the minority Democrats were able, with the votes of Republicans, to prevent the passage of the bill.  Nothing was accomplished, and the Democratic leaders early intimated that they were satisfied with such an outcome.

The reasons were various. The strength of the protection-ist minority in the Democratic membership had proved formidable. The willingness of some of the Republican leaders to make the revision of the tariff an issue in 1884 pointed a danger, despite the fact that the votes had revealed a con-siderable revisionist sentiment in the Republican member-ship. Instead of preparing to go to the country on the one issue of tariff reform, it seemed safer and promised a surer result to emphasize again the reform possibilities of the Dem-ocratic party on matters in general; in short, to realize on a national scale in 1884, as they had so bountifully in various states in 1882.

The considerable increase in the number of independents in politics might seem to favor this chance of the Democrats, unless, indeed, there should be in 1884 a really powerful third party. In the preceding twenty years, no one of the several new parties had succeeded in displacing the Democrats, either as the opponent of the Republican party, or as the potential agency for political reform on a national scale.

Of course this did not take into consideration the elements whose chief concern was economic distress. The Democrats, like the Republicans, had presented no program to reach the laborer or the farmer who was dissatisfied with the prevailing arrangement. Presumably such votes would be lost anyway, and were relatively few in number. But a call for political reform, a political housecleaning, would appeal to many who had usually voted the Republican ticket, and to many of these a tendency toward some, but not too much, tariff revision, would have an added appeal.

The Republican convention meeting in Chicago early in June nominated Blaine for the Presidency. There can be no question that he was the free choice of the delegates, as he was undoubtedly the leader most popular among those who always voted the Republican ticket. His nearest competitor

was President Arthur, who, says Rhodes, was the choice of the business men of the country. Senator Edmunds was again the choice of those who were called Independents, as distinguished from either of the factions in the party. Prior to the nomination, an attempt was made by resolution to bind the delegates to support the nominee, but after vigorous opposition, the proposal was withdrawn. When on the fourth ballot Blaine received sufficient votes to nominate, his nomination was made unanimous. John A. Logan, who had thrown his votes for the Presidential nomination to Blaine, was nominated for the Vice-Presidency. As he was a Stalwart, each faction had, as in 1880, its representation on the ticket.

As was anticipated, the Democratic convention, when it met in July, emphasized the need of political reform, and chose as its candidate Grover Cleveland, who in 1882 had been elected governor of New York, and whose administration had been marked by unusual independence and courage. His sturdy personal qualities, together with the story of his rise to prominence, made a decided appeal to the average man. He was opposed in convention by the Tammany delegates, which added to his popularity in some quarters. Moreover, Cleveland's attitude toward party struck a responsive cord in the heart of many an independent. He had said in 1882, "We shall utterly fail to read aright the signs of the times if we are not fully convinced that parties are but instruments through which the people work their will and that when they become less or more, the people desert or destroy them." [6]

Twice before within twenty years the Democrats had in convention selected as their nominee a man who had served as governor of New York. Again in 1884 they gave scant consideration to the representatives of the party who had been prominent in Congress. Many of them had, of course, a record

[6] Address at the Manhattan Club, New York City, December 5, 1882.

of opposition to the prosecution of the war against the southern states. Each of them had taken a position on the tariff. Except for the delegates who responded to the leadership of Tammany, and a considerable number of the experienced organization Democrats, the nomination was eagerly accepted. It was undoubtedly the strongest possible nomination at the time.

The situation has been summarized in these words: "The charges brought by the Republicans that he was a political mushroom, that his views on most national questions were unknown, and that his nomination was an attempt on the part of the Democrats to avoid the old issues, were true. His nomination showed a desire on the part of a controlling element of the party, at least, to break with the past and to make the question of administrative reform the prominent one in the campaign."[7]

The party declarations of 1884 need not be considered. There was no clear line to be drawn between the principles declared or the policies outlined. As in the case of the party records in the Congress, there was confusion, ambiguity, evasion. In such a condition a campaign of personalities developed. And indeed, if the important issue was one of political reform, then the character, career and possibilities as leader of each of the candidates was of transcendent importance. If one or the other of the party organizations was to come to power—and experience showed this to be inevitable —then the matter of leadership within that organization was most important of all.[8] None stressed acceptance of party as a necessary evil, and dubbed personal leadership a sorry device, more emphatically than did the independents.

---

[7] H. C. Thomas, *Return of the Democratic Party to Power*, 193.

[8] The new notion of party as a corporation susceptible of legal definition was treated by Herbert Tuttle in the *Atlantic Monthly* of September, 1884, under the title of "The Despotism of Party."

Notwithstanding the continuance of widespread dissatisfaction in the preceding dozen years, and the activity of independents in politics, there had been no post-convention protest on a national scale since 1872. No need for it had appeared, because the nomination of Hayes in 1876 and of Garfield in 1880 had been at least acceptable. But in 1884 the nomination of Blaine was not acceptable. Though some of the Independents, notably H. C. Lodge and Theodore Roosevelt, did not bolt the ticket, it was apparent soon after the adjournment of the convention that the disaffection would be serious. This despite the fact that there was a larger number of civil service reformers within the Republican membership, and that the platform was definite in its pledge. The leadership of Blaine was to many the only important factor.

Clubs of "independents" had been formed in different states, Boston and New York City being the chief centres. In July a meeting of delegates from the clubs was held in New York City. A proposal to form a third party was defeated. Instead an address was issued, and an independent canvass was carried on in many states. All this was intended to bring about the election of Cleveland. It was not an acceptance of the Democratic party organization or of its platform. Independence was emphasized. The extent to which the independents would go in destroying party government was finally seen when, in the course of their address, they stressed the difference of opinion among themselves, and advised voters to use their own discretion in voting for members of Congress.

The Prohibition Party, with J. P. St. John as candidate, aroused more than usual interest in the campaign. A nominee of this party had had scarcely more than 5,000 votes twelve years before, and only twice that number in 1880. This party was a source of worry to the Republicans in particular. As the event proved, more than 150,000 votes were cast for

St. John. Circumstances favored the ticket in 1884, yet its continued growth and even stronger showing in 1888 indicated that the appeal was more than temporary, or incident to the general dissatisfaction of 1884. The vote was so distributed in such states as New York, Connecticut, and New Jersey, as to make it possible for St. John to claim with plausibility that he had been the means of electing Cleveland.

After the October state election in Ohio, Blaine had spoken extensively, including Indiana, Illinois, New York and Ohio in his itinerary. It was generally agreed that the result would depend upon the outcome in four states, New York, New Jersey, Connecticut and Indiana. Cleveland carried each of these, but by small pluralities; in New York state by only 1149 out of a total of more than a million votes. It took two days to make certain the result. In the total popular vote, over ten million, Cleveland led Blaine by 23,000, but he had a minority of the total vote cast, because of the third of a million votes polled for the candidates of the lesser parties.[9] The Democrats won a majority of the membership of the House, while the Republicans retained control of the Senate.

### BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

General political background in E. E. Sparks, *National Development* (1906); J. F. Rhodes, *History of the United States*, VIII (1919); J. W. Burgess, *Administration of President Hayes* (1915). See also, C. R. Williams, *Life of Rutherford B. Hayes* (1914); Edward Stanwood, *Life of James G. Blaine* (1905); A. R. Conkling, *Life and Letters of Roscoe Conkling* (1889); F. E. Haynes, *James B. Weaver* (1919).

In addition to portions of Paxson and Haworth, cited in note of Chapter X, see also F. L. Paxson, *Recent History of the United States* (1921); C. A. Beard, *Contemporary American History* (1914).

[9] For analysis of the vote see Thomas, *op. cit.*, 226–228.

Special studies of value are C. C. Pearson, *The Readjustor Movement in Virginia* (1917); H. C. Thomas, *Return of the Democratic Party to Power in 1884* (1919); S. J. Buck, *The Granger Movement* (1913); M. S. Wildman, *Money Inflation in the United States* (1905).

"The party is, in fact, the most effective political entity in the modern national State. It has come into existence with the appearance of representative government on a large scale; its development has been unhampered by legal or constitutional traditions, and it represents the most vigorous attempt which has been made to adapt the form of our political institutions to the actual facts of human nature."

GRAHAM WALLAS, *Human Nature in Politics*, 82–83.

# CHAPTER XII

## REVOLT AGAINST PARTY GOVERNMENT

The Democratic party returns to power—Need of a strong national organiza-
tion—Cleveland as a "party president"—The Democrats and Civil Service
Reform—Economic changes—The remedy of Cleveland for the Treasury
surplus—The message of 1887—The Republican position—The Campaign
of 1888—New evidences of political revolt—Significant distribution of the
presidential vote—The Republican opportunity in 1889—Power of the
party machine in Congress—The Republican program of 1890—The elec-
tions of 1890—Demand for a new party—Different elements of protest—
The rise of a powerful section—Independence in the West—The People's
Party of 1892—The position of the dominant parties—The strength of
Populism—The representatives of revolt in Congress—Cleveland's man-
date.

UNDER any circumstances the accession of a Democrat to the
Presidency in 1885 would have been marked as a momentous
occasion in party history. Not since Buchanan gave way to
Lincoln in March of 1861 had a Democrat been the national
executive. During eight of the intervening twenty-four years
the Democrats had controlled the House of Representatives,
and for two years the Senate as well. But possession of the
Presidency was all important. However, the new President
had had no part in the national party activity of these years,
and he could hardly have been more unfamiliar with Washing-
ton and the national government than he soon revealed him-
self to be. His lack of acquaintance with the party leaders
with whom he must work, together with his habit of independ-
ent thought and action, which had so definitely marked his
career as governor of New York, promised an even greater
change in party government than that which might be ex-
pected to follow upon a change of control. The cabinet was

representative of different elements in the party, and lacked cohesion either on personal grounds or those of policy.

The Democratic national organization in this year of success played a more important part than heretofore. Since 1848 there had been a semblance of permanence in its general committee. It had become more and more apparent that the various state organizations and the group of leaders in the Congress needed a common agency for expression of varying party purposes. If the party was to win the support of voters in every part of a country of such size and diversity of interest, it must be by a general organization susceptible to guidance by a few men. Democratic possession of the Presidency, and with it the power of patronage, opened a period in which the national committee aspired to play a more important rôle in party activity.

Relations with Cleveland were soon strained. At such a time, when, not unnaturally, Democratic thirst for patronage was most intense, Cleveland came to office, not only conscious of the great support given him by "Independents," but also pledged to the maintenance of civil service reform under the existing law, and to a considerable amplification thereof. He took his stand in his inaugural, giving first place to his appeal for a limitation of partizan zeal. Within two months, it was apparent that Cleveland was not a "party president."

Yet the President, under cover of expired terms and "offensive partizanship," changed within six months nearly one fourth of the presidential postmasterships, and an eighth of the fourth class postmasterships. Naturally, the civil service reformers gave less and less support. However, by the close of the administration, despite the fact that there had been changes in all of the presidential postmasterships, and almost a "clean sweep" in the case of the fourth class group, the number in the classified service had been nearly doubled, and the principle of the Pendleton law appeared to be firmly established.

The eighties constituted a period of rapid economic change. These years witnessed the appearance on the national stage of most of the questions in the form in which they have since then been familiar to the voter. In each problem involving the currency, tariff, railways, labor or immigration, three aspects were evident; first, the economic question; second, the relation of the government to the question; and third, the political power of the group or groups interested in the relation of the government to the question. As parties were the agencies through which political action had to come, they, first of all, experienced the struggles over these problems. Each party organization was a battle ground. Never more apt was McCall's picture of parties as "a species of little republics inside of a great one." [1]

Cleveland found an ever increasing surplus in the national treasury. It was sixty-three million on June 30, 1885, and ninety-four million a year later. The tariff legislation of 1883 had failed to accomplish reduction of national income from tariff duties. In his inaugural address Cleveland had indicated his desire for a revision, and in his first message to the Congress made plain his view that "the question of free trade" was not involved. But it appeared otherwise to some of the Democrats in the House. Chairman Morrison of the Ways and Means Committee reported a tariff bill, but a group of protectionist Democrats led by Randall of Pennsylvania were able to prevent its passage. Despite this defeat, the President reiterated the need of revision in his message of 1886, and in 1887 devoted his entire message to it. The surplus at the end of June of 1887 had been more than $100,000,000.

Prior to either of these repetitions, the elections of 1886 had been held, and the Democratic majority in the House cut from forty to twelve. Moreover, the Republicans had retained control in the Senate. Thus, throughout his term,

---

[1] S. W. McCall, *The Liberty of Citizenship*, 23.

Cleveland had a divided Congress. Consequently the party history of these years is devoid of a party record of legislative accomplishment.

The message of 1887 has had few equals in the extent of its effect upon party history. Yet it was prepared by Cleveland, because, as he said, it was a condition and not a theory with which officials were confronted. It was estimated that the surplus for the current year would be 140 million. "With due regard to the interests of the manufacturer, and with assurance that no injury would be done the working man," the President asked that this surplus be cut down by a revision of certain of the tariff duties.

The House, to whom this message was read had organized with Carlisle of Kentucky as Speaker. Mills of Texas had been appointed Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee. After a lengthy debate a party tariff measure passed the House in July by a party vote, only four Democrats opposing, and five non-Democrats favoring the bill. There the matter ended again, inasmuch as the Senate was in control of the Republicans. But in the meantime the conventions of the presidential year had been held, and for the first time since 1864 a clear-cut question at issue between the parties appeared.

The Democrats had met in St. Louis early in June. They indorsed the President on "tariff reform," specifying a careful and cautious revision, and after the adoption of the platform, adopted also a resolution recommending "the early passage of the bill for the reduction of revenue now pending in the House of Representatives." There were many at the convention not in sympathy with the "independence" of Cleveland; it was notably true of delegates from his own state. But of course he became the nominee, and Allen G. Thurman of Ohio was chosen as candidate for the Vice-Presidency.

Blaine had said when the message of 1887 was shown him, "The President makes it the one issue. . . . I think it well to

have the question settled." The Republican leaders in Congress had taken a similar view. When the Republican convention met in Chicago, William McKinley from the committee on resolutions thus summarized the party position: "We are uncompromisingly in favor of the American system of protection. We protest against its destruction, as proposed by the President and his party. They serve the interests of Europe; we will support the interests of America. We accept the issue, and confidently appeal to the people for their judgment."

On the first ballot for the presidential nomination, the vote of the delegates was divided among thirteen men, on the fourth ballot there were ten, and six on the eighth ballot. The leading candidates were John Sherman, Walter Gresham, Russel Alger, and Benjamin Harrison. Stanwood has pointed out that the support of each of these men was wide-spread, that of Sherman, Gresham and Harrison coming from twenty-three states and territories, and that of Alger, from twenty. Rhodes has said that Blaine could have had the nomination by merely saying that he was a candidate.[2] The full tale of this convention cannot as yet be told, but it is clear that in the deadlock there was ample opportunity for much re-arrangement of various political interests.[3] But personal and state interests seem to have been uppermost. Both McKinley and Foraker appeared as possible candidates, the former declining on the floor of the convention, the latter refusing a tender of support made him by a delegation which visited him at his room. The convention sat for six days, and on Monday, June 25, Harrison was nominated.

It has been said that " the manufacturers had gained control of the Republican party organization, and upon their recommendation a little later the Republican National Com-

[2] J. F. Rhodes, *History of the United States*, VIII, 300.
[3] *Cf.* however, J. B. Foraker, *Notes of a Busy Life*, I, Chapters 22, 23; *also* C. S. Olcott, *Life of William McKinley*.

mittee chose Senator Matthew Stanley Quay as chairman and campaign manager." [4] Harrison declared in his speech of acceptance that the tariff was the "great issue," and that it was a choice between free trade and a protection of American labor, manufacturing and agriculture. He had served in the Senate and had been known, for his protectionist views. In this campaign there was no question as to the position of the party organizations and their candidates. And the electorate had now had experience with the type of government provided by each organization. An extensive canvass was made by both national committees and great funds of money raised and used. In Indiana the instruction to Republican leaders seems to have been in substance: "Divide the floaters into blocks of five and put a trusted man with the necessary funds in charge of these five, and make him responsible that none get away, and that all vote our ticket." [5]

No independent movement for political reform was present in this campaign but the Prohibitionists increased their vote more than sixty per cent. The vote expressive of a violent economic discontent was less than four years before. Yet recent years had revealed more vividly than before on American soil the chasm between the rebel who was content to use the accepted political means of attaining his objectives and the revolutionist who rejected all peaceful means in favor of direct action. The dastardly murder of a detachment of Chicago police in 1886 and the subsequent trial of those charged with the deed made it evident that the time was fast approaching, even in the United States, when violent disorder was to be used as a cloak for the advancement of causes inimical not only to the institution of private property but to the government as well.

As agencies for the development of public opinion the anar-

[4] F. L. Paxson, *Recent History of the United States*, 140.
[5] Quoted by Rhodes, *op. cit.*, VIII, 322.

chist organizations may be considered as parties, but of course they lacked the prime qualifications of political parties—the desire to attain control of the government and to carry forward a program. Socialists were to qualify, but as yet were not in the field. Henry George, neither socialist nor anarchist, freely accepted "politics" as "the way, and the only way."

Cleveland lost Indiana and New York; otherwise he carried the same states as he had four years before, including Connecticut and New Jersey. He had two thirds of a million more votes than in 1884, and more than a hundred thousand more votes than were cast for Harrison. But the populous states of the East, which Harrison carried, gave him a great lead in the electoral vote. All the states casting twenty or more electoral votes were carried by Harrison; these four states cast as many electoral votes, approximately, as the eleven states of the Old South. Notwithstanding that Harrison had a minority of the popular vote cast, he was to have supporting majorities in both houses of Congress, something that his predecessor had not had at any time. Indeed not since 1875 had Presidency and majorities in both houses been of the same party. The Republican membership and the Republican organization, now rapidly losing its leaders of most intense "reconstruction" passion, and somewhat sobered by a period of Democratic rule, were more of a unit in underlying belief than at any time since the early years of the party's life.

The Cleveland administration had naturally been a period for the revival of the passions of the war and of reconstruction. A Democrat had come to power with the bulk of his support in states in which, because of the disqualification of the colored voter, the white voter had a greater weight than the white voter in the north. Moreover, the conduct of the President, notably in his veto of pension bills and his approval of an order for the return of Confederate battle flags, had given

opportunity for such Republicans as Sherman and Foraker to revive the "Bloody Shirt" issue.

Truly the Republican party faced a remarkable opportunity in 1889. Measured by its most recent party declaration and the utterances of its leaders, it had a positive and definite program on one issue. The President's inaugural address again stressed the intent to defend American industry and protect American labor. The choice of advisors indicated that the large business interests of the country were to play a most important part in this administration. The appointment of John Wanamaker as Postmaster-General was perhaps the most conspicuous evidence of this fact.

For the first time in eight years the Republicans had a majority in the House. But the enactment of a party program required more than majorities and their agreement with the executive; it required that these majorities be enabled to control by majority vote the action of the Congress. The developments of recent years in the House had raised a serious question. As in the case of the deliberations upon the Mills bill in 1888, the minority in the House could, by refraining from participation, prevent the majority from transacting business: that is, it could, unless all or practically all of the members of the majority were present to constitute a quorum. And in the situation, as it existed when Congress assembled in 1889, this question was certain to arise, inasmuch as there was a Republican majority of only five.

The Republican caucus in the House of Representatives had selected Thomas B. Reed as its candidate for Speaker. He was elected. He was prepared to meet the situation in the interests of responsible and efficient party government. That any one of his party rivals for the Speakership would have met it in quite the way he did is unthinkable. Two of them, Joseph G. Cannon and David B. Henderson, later succeeded him in the office and followed in his footsteps, but

it was Reed who was instigator of a party practice in this
venture. And it was his third rival, William McKinley,
who was enabled, by the new departure, to carry through the
House the protective tariff bill that bore his name and that
gave him the reputation upon which his subsequent career
was based.[6]

When the Democratic minority proposed to refrain from
participation, Reed adopted the device of calling the names
of those whom he saw and of counting them present, thus
making up a quorum. It was first done in the case of a dis-
puted election report in January of 1890. Thus the partizan
character of the rule was emphasized. Moreover, the new
rules, when adopted by the House, included a declaration
that no dilatory motion need be entertained by the Speaker.
Thereafter for more than twenty years, with the exception
of a short period during which the Democrats reverted to
the earlier practice, the Speaker was no longer a mere presid-
ing officer; he was the second most powerful officer in the
government, and sometimes first in the councils of the ruling
party.

Against this background of party control and an assumption
of party responsibility, and with an executive who seemed
willing to follow the advice of John Sherman that "he should
have no policy distinct from that of his party," there was
revealed as never before the division of the party membership
upon the question of silver. It had been seriously divided
in 1878. The decline in the value of silver bullion and the
increase in the number of representatives of western areas
interested in silver production gave the demand for free coin-
age renewed life in each year. Nor did the passage of time
lessen the opposition of the anti-silver elements in Congress.
A party measure was prepared by the Secretary of Treasury,

[6] For interesting material see A. W. Dunn, *From Harrison to Harding*, I,
Chapter 2.

William Windom, to meet this situation. It satisfied no one, but was passed in the House by use of party discipline. It was lost in the Senate, and only after a renewal of negotiations, and desperate party pressure, was a compromise bill passed in mid-July of 1890. "In neither House of Congress did a Republican vote against the bill, or a Democrat in favor of it."[7]

In the same month, an act became law, declaring that "every contract, combination in form of trust or otherwise, or conspiracy, in restraint of trade or commerce among the several states, or with foreign nations," was illegal. Introduced originally by John Sherman, and revised in the councils of the party, the bill represented an attempt to placate the rising storm of indignation against "trusts" that seemed to grow greater and more dangerous with each succeeding month. It was counted a distinct part of the party record.

But of course it was the tariff enactment that chiefly concerned the party and the public. The bill introduced by McKinley in April of 1890 was a fulfillment of the party pledge. When the opposition of the silver advocates was reduced by agreement as to silver, the bill passed easily to the final stage and became law on October 1, 1890.

It was an imposing record of legislation for a party organization to present as its claim to indorsement when the congressional elections of 1890 were held. It included as well a fully developed pension program which was calculated to take care of any surplus in the Treasury, and which had a wide popular appeal. An expenditure of eighty-eight million in 1889 was to become by 1893 one hundred and fifty-nine million. At the same time party opportunity had been seized to strike at the political power of the South. The Federal Election bill was presented in the House in June and passed early in July. It provided for federal control of congressional

[7] Rhodes, *op. cit.*, VIII, 355.

elections, and was aimed at the disqualification of the negro in southern states. However it had not been easily adopted in party caucus of the House, and it did not come to a vote in the Senate, because of the activity of a minority of the Republicans.

It seems fair to say that such a record had been made by the leaders of the party only by achieving party harmony through a seeming reconciliation of conflicting economic interests, and that in no sense whatever did the Republican party membership of 1890 comply with the well-known definition of Burke. This is the more important because of their apparent unity in the campaign of 1888.

As far as was possible, the Democratic party made the "high tariff" the issue in the congressional elections. The increased cost of goods, and the explanation advanced, gave every-day point to the Democratic charge. There were, of course, other causes favoring the opposition party. The record of legislation had been gained at a cost of many a disgruntled dissenter. Altogether the result of the elections was overwhelming in its disaster to Republican hopes. Only eighty-eight Republicans were elected out of a total of three hundred and thirty-two. The Republican majority in the Senate was reduced to eight. Despite such evidence of popular disapproval the Republicans, of course, were to retain the seats of power and patronage until March of 1893. In the meantime, within both party organizations, there was a ceaseless fight for control.

The extent of the Democratic victory in 1890 amazed even the complacent American voter. There was a plurality of 800,000. Never before in the history of the party had the Republican membership in the House dropped below one hundred. It was now less than that of the Democrats at any time since the close of the period of Reconstruction. Yet with two hundred and thirty-five members in the House, the

Democratic organization was helpless to carry to culmination any legislative program, even had it wished to do so.

The following winter, when referring to the defeat of the Force bill, which provided for federal control of congressional elections, Senator Hoar remarked that such a result meant the death of the Republican party. The editor of the *Nation* was moved to say that "political organizations, like individual politicians, often do not recognize that they are dead for some time after the event." The Republicanism of the period of slavery and reconstruction had long since given way to a party endeavoring to control the currents of the new day and its eclipse in popular favor was only temporary.

In the quarter of a century since their reappearance in the congressional elections of 1866, the Democratic and Republican parties had dominated the American political scene. It was now clear that as agencies for the expression of the will of the electorate they did not greatly differ one from the other; their membership was divided upon matters of public policy, notably on currency; their organizations were in the hands of an army of politicians whose chief business was the protection of party success rather than advancement of particular policies; and their insurgent members were lamed by a lack of avenues for the expression of popular interest in any constructive national policy. By the middle of the first administration of Cleveland it had been apparent that the Democracy was quite as "reliable" and "respectable" as the Republican party. But it was also evident that the class-conscious laboring interests and the less prosperous agricultural elements, like the political reformers, had little or nothing to expect of either of the two dominant party organizations. What seemed to be the need was not only a new party, but also a new kind of party.

Had the population of the country occupied the same area in 1890 that it had in 1865, it is possible that the two parties

would more nearly have reflected the needs of the people, both as avenues for the expression of opinion in elections and as agencies for accomplishment of purpose in government. For it is probable that the economic interests and social diversities would have been such as to force one of the two parties to be radical, as the other would have been conservative. But the nation had shifted its center of population one hundred and fifty miles to the westward; had so poured its population westward that now there were ten million more people west, than east, of the Alleghanies, and thirty-three million in the Mississippi valley, where in 1860 there had been only half as many.[8] Among such a people it was plain that in the absence of social crystallization there was no pressing call for either of the two great parties to be radical. At the same time it was evident that both would be seriously divided upon questions that interested the people of the newer areas. And a continued growth of the West would force a preponderantly western program upon the attention of the nation.[9]

To understand fully the outcome it is necessary to distinguish the party dissensions which had been economic in purpose from those which had been reformatory. Of course if judgment be made on the basis of platform declaration, each third party which had appeared in the years (1865-1890) contained both elements. But the Liberal Republican organization of 1872 and the Independent conference of 1884 serve to illustrate the dominance of the reform purpose, whereas the Greenback party, 1876-1884, and the United Labor party of 1888 were movements designed to promote fundamental changes in American governmental policy. None of these movements developed effective party organizations, and re-

[8] Map showing successive frontier lines in C. R. Fish, *Development of American Nationality*, 438.

[9] See, in particular, F. J. Turner, *The Frontier in American History*, Chapters 7, 8.

mained at best organs of protest. And protest by itself was in time disappointing.

The rapid extension of the frontier in the twenty years, 1870–1890, brought a group of new states into the Union. The rapidity of the change was most marked when the Fifty-First Congress convened in 1889. There were five representatives and eight senators from four new states. A little more than a year later, the picture of expansion was drawn in these words:

"Mr. President, by the readjustment of the political forces of the nation under the Eleventh Census, the seat of political power has at last been transferred from the circumference of this country to its center. It has beeen transferred from the seaboard to the great intra-mountain region between the Alleghanies and the Sierras, extending from the British possessions to the Gulf of Mexico, a region whose growth is one of the wonders and marvels of modern civilization. It seems as if the column of migration had paused in its westward march to build upon those tranquil plains and in those fertile valleys a fabric of civilization that should be the wonder and admiration of the world; rich in every element of present prosperity but richer in every prophecy of future greatness and renown. . . . Mr. President, we have now within those limits, . . . the granary of the world, a majority of the members of this body, of the House of Representatives and of the Electoral College." [10]

More than that, the opening of this vast area had been followed by over-production and consequent widespread distress. Naturally, the demand for an expansion in currency made great headway in these western areas, and, as naturally, the profits of the middle-man and the rates of the railway seemed to the pioneer farmer evidences of a system that worked to his disadvantage. The great party organi-

[10] J. J. Ingalls in the U. S. Senate, January 14, 1891.

zations were responsive to the financial interests. If re-
dress was to be had, a separate political party seemed
necessary.

Independents had appeared in Congress in small numbers
ever since 1873. But they rarely had exercised an appreciable
influence. In 1890, however, nine candidates who termed
themselves members of the Farmers' Alliance were elected to
the House of Representatives, and as a result of the elections
in South Dakota and Kansas, two members of that organiza-
tion were chosen to go to the United States Senate. But
the Farmers' Alliance was not a political party in such a
sense as were the two great parties. It was a name under
which candidates for office had secured for some time the
support of a considerable body of votes in different parts of
the country. It was becoming more than that, for since
1881 there had been a loose organization of the alliances in
various states. There had been general conferences, and by
1889 an enrollment of fifty thousand members was reported.
But like the Granger movement which had preceded it,
it was exclusively agrarian in genuine interest, and the ele-
ment of protest overshadowed program or policy on any
national scale.

To a membership whose primary grievances were economic,
came proposals from sources quite diverse; first from an or-
ganization of silver miners interested in a better market for
their product, and second, from the group of labor organizers
who felt that the plight of the farmer had forced home the
need of a radical change in the prevailing economic system.
Thus it developed that the leaders of the Farmers' Alliance
accepted the call for free silver as part of their program. Early
in 1891 representatives of labor and of the farmer came to-
gether in conference in Cincinnati and insured an important
third party in the ensuing campaign. A national committee
was appointed, which met in conference again in February of

1892. In the Cincinnati conference of 1891, the term, "People's Party" was agreed upon.

Nearly 1300 delegates met in Omaha on July 2, 1892, in the first national convention of this People's Party. Explanation of the temper of this assemblage may be found in their own words, "The conditions which surround us best justify our coöperation; we meet in the midst of a nation brought to the verge of moral, political and material ruin. . . . We have witnessed for more than a quarter of a century the struggles of the two great political parties for power and plunder, while grievous wrongs have been inflicted upon the suffering public. We charge that the controlling influences dominating both these parties have permitted the existing dreadful conditions to develop without serious effort to prevent or restrain them." The new party was organized to obtain control of the government, in order "to restore the government of the Republic to the hands of the plain people."

As has been seen, such a movement had been long in process of formation. As it stood in mid-summer of 1892, its most conspicuous elements were agricultural and mining interests, and its most immediate demand the free and unlimited coinage of silver. There was a long declaration of grievances, a platform, and a supplementary program of suggestions. But the point of greatest significance was the organization of the party itself, inchoate and uncertain though it appeared to be. Here was an avenue for political protest on a national scale. James B. Weaver of Iowa became the nominee.

The Republican convention, meeting in Minneapolis, renominated Benjamin Harrison. The same forces were in control as had been four years earlier, and the party reaffirmed "the American doctrine of protection." The division of the party membership upon the question of silver necessitated a long plank that demanded bi-metallism, but insisted that "the purchasing and debt-paying power of the dollar, whether of

silver, gold or paper, shall be at all times equal." There was reaffirmation of an opposition "to all combinations of capital, organized in trusts or otherwise, to control arbitrarily the condition of trade."

Cleveland had lost the support of many of the Democratic party leaders before he left office in 1889. But during the administration of Harrison there had been evidences of his continued, and perhaps growing, popularity with the people. He was the only man of unmistakable national prominence that had led the party since the Civil War. Doubtless this was in large measure due to his opportunity in the Presidency, for, as always, the occupancy of that office had raised him into a position of unexcelled advantage. His defeat in 1888, including as it did his defeat in his own state, raised the question of the advisability of re-nominating him. It was, however, pointed out that he had carried the state in 1884, in spite of opposition within his party. More pointedly, it was said that if tariff reduction was to be the issue of the campaign, the man who had raised the issue into party prominence should be the nominee.

In New York the opposition to his nomination took form in the advocacy of the nomination of David B. Hill. Hill, like Tilden and Cleveland, had been Governor of New York. He was a leader of recognized ability. He was backed by all the power of Tammany Hall. He secured the support of his state delegation, although the procedure in accomplishing this result was unprecedented and caused widespread distrust. In fact, the victory of Hill in New York had accentuated the movement for Cleveland's nomination. Said the *New York World*, "Mr. Cleveland is not a new and untried man. He was President for four years. . . . To say that Mr. Cleveland would not be a strong candidate is to say that the Democracy does not prize honesty, sincerity, and courage. It is to say that the cause of tariff reform and honest and economical

government, which triumphed greatly in the elections of 1890 and again last year, is not strong enough to elect its most conspicuous champion." [11]

As in the conventions of 1884 and 1888, there was no unanimity of opinion on the question of tariff. As in the previous conventions, those favoring a moderate statement won in the committee on resolutions, and those favoring a more advanced and more definite statement presented an amendment upon the floor of the convention. After a denunciation of the McKinley law, it was declared to be a fundamental principle of the Democratic party that "the Federal government has no constitutional power to impose and collect tariff duties, except for the purposes of revenue only, and we demand that the collection of such taxes shall be limited to the necessities of the government when honestly and economically administered." Cleveland was nominated on the first ballot.

He delivered his acceptance speech in Madison Square Garden, New York City. As the platform and his nomination had pointed to tariff as the paramount issue, so also did this address. But there was qualification and elaboration, which led to the criticism that he had not only modified the platform declaration, but that he was less pronounced in his view of the need of action than he had been in 1887. Said Cleveland, "Though we oppose the theory that tariff laws may be passed having for their object the granting of discrimination and unfair governmental aid to private ventures, we urge no exterminating war against any American interests . . . we contemplate a fair and careful distribution of necessary tariff burden rather than the precipitation of free trade."

For the first time in the history of the United States, the candidates of the two leading parties were men who had been President. There was no uncertainty, either among party

[11] J. L. Heaton (ed.), *The Story of a Page*, 82-83.

leaders or among the people, as to the part that either Cleveland or Harrison would play in party government.   Perhaps this fact had its part in providing what was by general agreement a "lifeless canvass."   Yet of the two, Cleveland was by all tests the more positive figure.   It seems fair to say that in this canvass Cleveland was stronger than his party; that is, that the weakness of the Democratic ticket with the independent voter was represented by the purpose of the Democratic party organization displayed in the selection of Adlai Stevenson, former third assistant Postmaster-General, as candidate for the Vice-Presidency.   As for the Republican ticket, its appeal was that made by a powerful organization, closely allied with the large financial interests, which could be depended upon to maintain the *status quo*, for Harrison, as unpopular with the masses as he was irritating to party workers, had within the organization pursued a coöperative and conciliatory course.

Of course either Cleveland or Harrison would be the victor. The candidacy of Weaver would influence the final result only as votes cast for him drew votes from either Cleveland or Harrison in states where the division of votes was fairly even. There were a number of such states.   The People's Party candidate polled votes in every state in the union except Delaware; in each of twenty-six states there were more than ten thousand votes.   In Colorado, Kansas, Idaho and Nevada, where there was no Democratic ticket in the field, Weaver carried the state, gaining thereby twenty electoral votes, and adding thereto one electoral vote from North Dakota and one from Oregon, states in which the division of votes was close.   The total popular vote for Weaver was 1,040,886. Unquestionably this vote worked a greater disadvantage to Harrison than to Cleveland, in that the fusion of Populists and Democrats was made in the West, whereas that of the Populists with the Republicans was in the South, where the

Democratic lead was so great as to insure success notwithstanding. Ten Populists were elected to the House of Representatives, and five men, classed as Populists, were to take their places in the Senate.

Cleveland's popular vote was more than a third of a million in excess of that of Harrison, and he won the electoral votes of such states as Wisconsin and Illinois, as well as New York and Indiana. Yet it was a notable fact that Montana, Nebraska, Iowa, Minnesota, Washington and South Dakota were carried by Harrison.

Thus Cleveland won the presidency for the second time, and his lead in the popular vote was more than in 1888, when he had been defeated by Harrison, or in 1884, when he had won from Blaine. But of the total vote cast, that is, approximately twelve million, Cleveland was in the minority by about a half million votes. Yet, of course, it was a mandate to power, for him and for his party. The more so, because the elections of 1892 resulted in returning to both House and Senate majorities of members elected as Democrats. Thus, for the first time since the Civil War, the Democratic party organization was to be put to a test of power of genuine party responsibility.

### BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

General political background in D. R. Dewey, *National Problems* (1907); J. F. Rhodes, *History of the United States*, VIII (1919); H. J. Ford, *The Cleveland Era* (1919); S. J. Buck, *The Agrarian Crusade* (1920).

Portions of shorter histories cited in previous chapter. See also S. W. McCall, *Life of Thomas B. Reed* (1914); Matilda Gresham, *Life of Walter Gresham* (1919); F. E. Haynes, *Life of James B. Weaver* (1919); John Sherman, *Recollections* (1896); T. E. Burton, *John Sherman* (1906); Robert McElroy, *Grover Cleveland* (1923).

Special studies include Haynes, cited in Chapter X; F. L. McVey,

*The Populist Movement* (1896); A. M. Arnett, *The Populist Movement in Georgia* (1922).

Special papers include: F. E. Haynes, "The New Sectionalism," in *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, X, 269 (1896); F. J. Turner, "Is Sectionalism in America Dying Away?" in *American Journal of Sociology*, XVIII, 661.

"But the shibboleth of 'Republican' or 'Democrat' has availed in national antagonism for more than forty years since the Civil War ended. Neither political sect stands clearly for the principles that it was organized and named to promote. Are these two political hosts of boasted name and lineage to antagonize still through centuries to come, unreconciled, undisbanded? Are they to take up new issues, each with forceful alacrity, upon which both followings are divided in sentiment, and on which neither can fight with full effect, while they prevent their rank and file from recombining naturally?"

JAMES SCHOULER, *Ideals of the Republic*, 214.

# CHAPTER XIII

## DIVISION OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY

The first opportunity of the Democratic party since 1866—The money question divides the party—The attempted revision of the tariff—The dominance of protest in the elections of 1894—The leadership of Cleveland—The campaign for control of the party organization—Additional causes for disintegration—The uncertainty in the Republican party—The Republican platform and candidate—The Democratic convention of 1896—The triumph of the silver forces and nomination of Bryan—The realignment of political forces—The party methods—Appearance of new partizanship—Distribution of the vote—The failure of the "new" Democracy—Disappearance of Populism.

A. LAWRENCE LOWELL has said of parties that they are "agencies whereby public attention is brought to a focus on certain questions that must be decided." [1] As a party charged with a mandate of the electorate, the Democracy in 1893 for the first time since its rebirth in 1866 was free to enact into law its declarations upon the public questions. None of its declarations of 1892 or of any of the preceding platforms, save only that on tariff, may be said to have brought public questions to a focus. As a party of "outs" it had been ever present, but as a party of impelling opposition it had been a failure.

But before the Democratic party had opportunity to show its will upon the revision of the tariff, a subject upon which its leadership had been marked since 1885, and with which it was chiefly identified in the public mind, the President and the Democratic majorities in Congress were faced with the necessity of choosing and directing a well defined course with relation to the currency. Cleveland found that the surplus

[1] A. L. Lowell, *Public Opinion and Popular Government*, 66.

233

which had been of great concern to him during his first term was gone; the gold reserve in April sank below the danger point of one hundred million, and by the middle of May the country was in the midst of general panic. As was to be expected from his earlier utterances, Cleveland sought a protection for the government in a repeal of the Silver Purchase Act of 1890. Late in June he summoned Congress to meet in August for the purpose of taking such action.

But, as has been seen, the representatives of the two great parties had long been divided upon the question of the treatment of silver. Of the two parties the Democratic majorities were the more seriously divided upon the proposed repeal. The repeal was accomplished not by the votes of the Democratic majorities in the House and the Senate, but by a portion of those members united with the votes of a greater number of Republicans. The bill became a law on the first of November. Long before this the panic had passed its crisis, but the silver issue, forced as it was upon the party in power, served to draw the lines within the party in such a way as to compel a fight for control of the party organization. As compromise was seen to be no longer possible each faction prepared to seek success either in the party or out of it, and recognized that control of the organization or its open abandonment was at last the supreme question.

For the time being, however, nearly all remained within the party membership, for until the next stated election time the necessity remained of attempting or seeming to attempt to carry out the chief proposal of the party convention; that is, a revision of the tariff. Cleveland urged this upon the Congress when it met in December. In the House a Democratic bill was presented and was indorsed by the party membership there. In the Senate it was soon evident that there were dangerous differences within the Democratic membership, partly due to the absence of effective legislative leadership, and also

to the fact that several of the most influential party leaders in that body were avowed protectionists, notably Brice of Ohio and Gorman of Maryland. The House bill was changed by a multitude of amendments until its original character was lost. The President refused to sign the resultant Wilson-Gorman bill, and it became a law without his signature. Without question it was, as Cleveland declared it to be, a product of "party perfidy and party dishonor."

Surely such a spectacle of party inefficiency, coupled as it was with evidences of looseness of thought as to party promise and party responsibility, might well bring satisfaction to those who had long maintained that the existent parties were organizations held together in spite of masses of inconsistencies and multitudes of antagonisms only by their desire for power. It was clearer than it ever had been before that for Democratic official and for Democratic voter, as indeed for the Republicans as well, the test of party allegiance was impossible to define with a certainty. Convention platform, legislative enactment, executive pronouncement, all were seen to be subject to qualification and amendment and sometimes repudiation. In such a situation it seemed to many that the primary need was a party organization that knew its own mind, was willing to go to the country with a clearly stated policy, and that promised in office, should it obtain a majority support, the certainty of the enactment of its program.

In the congressional elections of 1894 there was of course no real opportunity for a national campaign. It has been shown, however, that the Populist party secured a greater popular support than two years earlier in the presidential campaign, electing seven members of the House, securing support in state legislatures sufficient to elect six United States senators and electing nearly five hundred state officers. Yet it was the candidates who were presented as nominees of the Republican party who reaped the greatest benefit from the

prevailing dissatisfaction. They secured a huge majority in the House of Representatives and gained what amounted to a working plurality in the Senate. Thus for two more years party responsibility was to be divided.

In the years 1893-95 the leadership of the President was as prominent in the public mind as it was repudiated in the party councils. It may aid in an understanding of the presidential campaign of 1896 to relate that leadership to the time in which it appeared.

Cleveland was the first of three men who in the period between 1880 and 1920 so captured the popular imagination as to make effective competition useless for the time being. Except for these three, no American citizen entirely filled the public eye for even a brief period. During his period of ascendancy each of these men attempted to lead the nation into unaccustomed paths, and each lost control of his party by so doing. Of the three, Cleveland seemed to make the most signal failure. Perhaps it was in a measure because he was the forerunner of Roosevelt and Wilson. But there was a deeper reason. To Woodrow Wilson's summary of Cleveland as "more man than partizan"[2] it may be added that he was more President than party leader.

Cleveland rose to prominence as a conscientious public official in Buffalo and in Albany, "doing his duty." This, more frequently than not, consisted in restraining men from performing illegal or unjust acts; in pointing out things that ought not to be done. So, too, in the Presidency Cleveland opposed the pension graft gallantly, and within limits, effectively; opposed senatorial dictation in his appointments stubbornly, and in the case of the appointment of Justice White with facile irony; opposed the free silver movement to the point of risking national bankruptcy, and finally brought the temporary ruin of the political party of which he was the tit-

[2] "Mr. Cleveland as President," in *The Atlantic Monthly* (March 1897).

ular leader.  In these matters Cleveland unquestionably chose the part of wisdom.  They mark the man utterly immune from party virus and all love of mere personal triumph.

But by themselves they do not mark the statesman.  Definite proposals to meet the needs of the country in the way of an elastic currency, the needs of the farmer for more extended credit, the needs of the laborer for a less number of working hours—these are not found.  True there was the Cleveland advocacy of the lower tariff; upon that it is assumed he pointed the way.  It seems rather that here again it was primarily an opposition to the prevailing tariffs, and the way of making them.  As he himself said in his memorable message, he was dealing with a condition and not a theory, and the tariff bill which had his approval was a moderate protective tariff.

Certainly Cleveland furnished leadership.  But the record of his party in legislation was barren, and the party entered upon a long period of exile.  Such activity as that of Cleveland, energetic, untiring and splendid, serving as it did as a moral tonic to the nation, cannot be viewed as effective party leadership.  Yet it must be said that no other leader since the Civil War had occupied quite the place that Cleveland won for himself.  We may note, however, that he is within the period marked out by Henry Adams in his statement that "one might search the whole list of Congress, judiciary and executive during the twenty-five years 1870-1895 and find little but damaged reputation.  The period was poor in purpose and barren in results." [3]

One may conceive of the government of the United States as a great machine working cumbersomely and now and then having grave difficulty because of breaks in the mechanism.  One may conceive of various leaders at work at the task of directing, repairing and cleaning the machine.  Some are negligent, some ignorant, and some are faulty in judg-

[3] *The Education of Henry Adams*, 294.

ment.[4]  But such a view of government and of officials in charge is of little aid in understanding the point of view of the insurgent against party leadership and his approach to the campaign of 1896.

The party issue was definitely drawn in the course of the debate on the proposed repeal of the Silver Purchase Act.  One of the insurgents stated it with unmistakable frankness, "Today the Democratic party stands between two great forces each inviting its support.  On one side stand the corporate interests of the nation, its moneyed institutions, its aggregations of wealth and capital, imperious, arrogant, compassionless. They demand special legislation favors, privileges, immunities. . . .  On the other hand stands the unnumbered throng which gave a name to the Democratic party and for which it has assumed to speak."[5]  Such a costuming had been given special economic interest long before this time; such an alignment has often since that time appealed to the insurgent against party rule.  Yet it is from the time of this utterance of Congressman William Jennings Bryan in 1893 that we may easily trace the struggle for party control.

The failure of the repeal to meet the need of the government in protecting the gold reserve served to emphasize the explanation of the silver men.  The next remedy of the administration added fuel to the fire of their attack.  For in the purchase of gold by the sale of bonds and the active coöperation of the "Morgan interests" the silver men saw additional evidence of the gold conspiracy.  It served to deepen the gulf between the two factions in the Democratic party and the process was accompanied by passionate cries that suggested class struggle rather than differences of political opinion upon matters of accustomed interest to the men in public life.

There was still other evidence of a re-alignment.  Labor

---

[4] *Cf.* H. J. Ford, *The Cleveland Era.*
[5] W. J. Bryan in the House of Representatives, August 16, 1893.

unrest had increased with the hard times of 1893. Strikes were common. Finally in the Pullman car strike of 1894 the issue was drawn on a national scale. When the matter reached the point of the enforcement of law in the transmission of the mails the President authorized the use of the army. Thereby he brought himself in opposition to a great mass of laboring men who saw in the use of the federal injunction backed by the military power a weapon of tyranny. He was confronted by the active resistance of a powerful member of the Democratic party, Governor Altgeld of Illinois, and he appeared to give unmistakable evidence of the truth of the charge, that he aimed at an all powerful federal government quite contrary to the traditional state rights doctrine of his party.

Although the divisions within the Republican party were far less marked than those in the Democracy it was true of each of the parties in 1895 that internal dissension made the future of the party dependent upon the action of the national convention of the next year.

An attempt to define sharply the issue within the Democratic party was made by a group of silver Democrats in the spring of 1895. "We believe," said they, "that a large majority of the Democrats of the United States favor bi-metallism . . and we assert that the majority have and should exercise the right to control the policy of the party and retain the party name."[6] The closing words of this statement were prophetic of the type of fight which was made and which resulted in a victory in the national convention of the following year. Of the thirty-three signers, eight came from South Atlantic states, five from Pacific states, and twenty from Mississippi valley states. Five years before, Senator O. H. Platt had expressed the fear not only that a free silver bill might pass Congress, but, also, in case of a presidential veto which he was sure would be given by Harrison, that the Republican party would be

[6] Cited by W. J. Bryan, in *The First Battle*, 157.

broken up with the west against the east. This expectation was now to be realized, but within the Democratic organization.

The President indicated his willingness to accept the challenge to a fight for party control. He expressed his intention not to support a Democratic ticket, that should repudiate his stand upon the gold standard. By the first of June of 1895 it was evident that the issue would probably be decided in the state conventions that were to meet between that time and the convening of the national convention a year later.

Within the year the struggle was continued, but not until the very eve of the meeting of the Democratic national convention had all conventions taken action. On July first, however, a poll of Democratic delegates chosen gave 585 for a declaration in favor of free silver and 345 opposed to it, a part only of the latter being pledged to the gold standard. The anti-silver delegates had been elected in the New England states, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota. The remaining states with the exception of Florida, where no statement on the money question was made, declared in favor of the free coinage of silver at a ratio of sixteen to one. On the basis of delegates, or of the number of states, the silver forces in the party membership had seemed to win an overwhelming victory. They would presumably take over the party organization at the national convention, adopt a platform in which "free silver" would appear as the paramount issue, and nominate a candidate whose career and professions were unmistakably in line with such attitude. This would involve open repudiation of the President and cut off all hope of support by gold Democrats.

Before that meeting, however, the Republicans met in convention at St. Louis. As has been seen, the division within that party had been less marked, and the events of the preceding year had shown the willingness of most of the elements

in that body to subordinate the money question to that of the tariff. The extremes were represented by leaders from the east and west, as was to be expected, those of the east favoring a declaration in support of the gold standard and for making it the outstanding issue, those of eight states from the west favoring an unqualified declaration in favor of free silver. The great bulk of the states in their conventions indorsed the gold standard, but only a minority wished to make it the leading issue, preferring to stress again the protective tariff. Abundant room was left for compromise. This view was strong in most states of the middle-west. When the convention met on June fifteenth there were, clearly marked, three factions on the basis of their view of the treatment of the money question.

The preliminaries of the Republican convention had included another struggle, that of Marcus Alonzo Hanna to secure the support of sufficient delegates to nominate William McKinley. By a personal canvass covering the period of more than eighteen months Hanna had been successful in securing the support of a majority of the delegates. With the protective tariff a paramount issue such a nomination would appear quite natural. But on the money question McKinley had been a bi-metallist, and even at this late date was prepared to compromise. His chief rival, Thomas B. Reed, was uncompromising on the matter of the gold standard. In such a situation those who favored McKinley subordinated the money question. The gold forces favored definite action, and recognizing the controlling power of Hanna made appeal to him to provide an uncompromising gold standard plank. He appeared to yield, although existing evidence now seems to show it to have been his original intention to so declare the issue. The vote in the Committee on Resolutions on a free coinage declaration revealed a majority for gold of only four, and the fight was carried to the floor

of the convention. Such a procedure could result only in the defeat of the free silver advocates and therefore was but a preliminary to their secession. Feeling was intense and quite unlike the superficial antagonisms of nerve-broken conventions. It appeared a difference not only of policy but also of principle. In the convention the substitute silver declaration of Senator H. M. Teller was defeated by a vote of 818 to 105, and thirty-four delegates representing Montana, Utah, Colorado, Idaho and South Dakota withdrew from the convention. The significance of the withdrawal rested rather in the personnel than in the number.

J. B. Foraker of Ohio nominated McKinley, but it was Senator Thurston of Nebraska who best voiced the hopes of those leaders who saw in the nomination, if not in the platform, a chance that compromise and accommodation would win the continued support of habitual Republican voters. "This," said he, "is the year of the people. They framed the issue of the campaign. Is it money? The western mountains clamor for silver, the eastern seashore for gold, but millions ask for work." Thurston felt then, and even a month after the Chicago convention, that the real issue was that of a protective tariff, and McKinley shared this view.

Hanna emerged from the St. Louis convention the most powerful leader in the Republican organization. He had had a long period of training, having been for many years a member of the state committee in Ohio and having participated in the national conventions since 1884. He had now nominated his friend for the Presidency, and had secured a platform in which the protective tariff as well as the gold standard was treated as a paramount issue. He had secured, in short, a position from which it was possible for him to treat at an advantage with such powerful Republican leaders as Platt of New York and Quay of Pennsylvania. Unlike either of them he had as yet held no public office. He was an outstanding example of

the business man in politics who had now secured a controlling interest in a political organization.

His biographer has written of him as follows: "He was a practical politician, who worked with the machine. He looked askance at any attempt to reform prevailing political methods, which might temporarily interfere with partizan harmony and efficiency. He coöperated with some of the worst elements in his party as well as with the best. He conceived it as his business above all to keep the Republicans united, so that they could march to victory under his leadership. They could be kept united, only in case the existing local organizations were accepted and possible corruption overlooked. Reformers who were opposed to the local machines, and were thereby endangering local Republican ascendency, obtained no sympathy from him."[7] More succinctly it has been said that "self-respecting and direct, he believed it to be the first function of government to protect property, and that property should organize for that purpose."[8] The advent of Hanna rather than the nomination of McKinley marked the change in leadership which had come suddenly upon the Republican organization. Blaine, Grant, Conkling and Sherman had passed from power; such men as Reed, Cullom, Burrows, Foraker and McKinley represented the group trained in the period of reconstruction, but as younger men; McKinley was the last of the Civil War officers to be nominated for the Presidency. Hanna was the representative of a new era.

The Democratic convention met in Chicago. The national committee, a majority of whose members were not in favor of free silver, prepared to organize the convention. But prior to the meeting of the convention an organization of silver delegates was effected and a plan laid to take control of the convention at the outset. When, therefore, the national com-

[7] Herbert Croly, *Marcus A. Hanna*, 300.
[8] F. L. Paxson, *The New Nation*, 252.

mittee proposed David B. Hill as temporary chairman, a nomination was made from the floor, and despite the alleged lack of precedent and the obvious discourtesy to the national committee, the nominee, John W. Daniel, was elected by the vote of 556 to 349. Thus Daniel spoke for a majority of the Democratic delegates when he made an urgent appeal for free silver. He touched at once upon the issue that was to appear more and more as the campaign progressed. "As this majority of Democrats is not sectional neither is it for any privilege of class or class legislation." The convention was organized in the interests of the majority, and Stephen M. White of California in taking the chair as permanent presiding officer stressed the triumph of the people's cause as there exemplified and expressed.

The disagreement within the convention was so fundamental that the committee on platform, unable to agree on compromise, presented two reports, and a long acrimonious debate took place on the floor of the convention, an occurrence quite unusual in party conventions. It was in this debate, participated in by a group of men of national reputation that William Jennings Bryan gave the closing argument in favor of the majority report. It was the spirit of this closing address which marked the speaker as the leader of a new crusade. Bryan had been active in the silver canvass, as we have seen, and was well known to all of the silver leaders. His career in the House of Representatives had been unusual for so young a man; he had been a marked man for argument as well as for oratory, and his wit and political keenness had interested so seasoned a politician as Reed. But in his campaign for free silver and his arguments in debate on the tariff and the income tax it is the stern faced, thin lipped evangelist who must be seen, if there is to be understanding of the success of his leadership. It was a crusader speaking with the most effective voice of his generation who claimed to speak for "the cause of

humanity" and who said, "In this contest brother has been arrayed against brother, father against son. The warmest ties of love, acquaintance and association have been disregarded," and again, "We have petitioned, and our petitions have been scorned; we have entreated, and our·entreaties have been disregarded; we have begged, and they have mocked when our calamity came. We beg no longer; we entreat no more; we petition no more. We defy them."[9] Doubtless Bryan meant less than the passion of these words would indicate. They have a familiar sound, and many a crusader before him had so drawn the picture of his crusade. Yet to the unsympathetic, particularly to those removed from the heat of this contest, such an appeal was ominous. What would the masses do with and for such a leader?

At no time was there doubt as to the outcome of the platform contest in the convention, and the vote upon the majority report was 628 to 301. Thus did the Democratic party in convention declare, as the Populists had urged four years before, that free coinage of silver was the paramount issue and that all necessary reform would follow upon a restoration of silver to a parity with gold. Yet the underlying spirit of those who now controlled the Democratic party was one of bitter protest and truculent insurgency. Nowhere was it more clearly revealed than in the paragraph denouncing "arbitrary interference by federal authorities in local affairs . . . . as a violation of the Constitution of the United States and a crime against free institutions."

As has often been the case in Democratic conventions, there was at the outset no outstanding candidate for the presidential nomination. The nature of the platform now made the nomination of an uncompromising silver man necessary. Bryan's name had been suggested in Nebraska early in the year, and he certainly entertained the possibility of his nom-

[9] W. J. Bryan, *The First Battle*, 199–200.

ination before he went to Chicago. Richard P. Bland of Missouri led the poll on three votes, was then passed by Bryan, who was nominated by the necessary two thirds vote on the fifth ballot. The total vote cast in this balloting was 709, thus revealing to the country that a considerable number of the delegates who had opposed the platform were refraining from participation in a nomination. After Bryan's nomination the number of bolters was increased, and in the nomination of Arthur Sewall for the Vice-Presidency only 679 delegates participated.

The division in the party membership was so marked that for once all doubt was removed as to the primary interest which moved men to a party allegiance. The minority members reported that there were proposals in the majority report which they considered extreme and revolutionary, and that much was contrary to the well recognized principles of the party. This was true, and the sponsors of the new spirit gloried in the fact that it was so. They refused the proposed vote of approval upon the Cleveland administration, thus dramatically emphasizing their intention to put meaning of party name above all else. That they saw possible victory, not in polling the usual Democratic vote, but in bringing to the new Democracy a support from many quarters, was seen in the nature and extent of their appeal for the aid "of all citizens" who approved of the platform.

The majority would not have recognized the picture of themselves as "a wild eyed and rattlebrained horde of the red flag," as drawn by the editor of the *New York Mail and Express*, but they would have agreed that "the platform dates the inauguration of a new era in our politics."

Since 1892 the aim of the Populist party leaders had been to make their organization the single agency for the advancement of the silver program in 1896. To this end they were aided by the Bi-metallic League, members of which put their

interest in silver above allegiance to any party. The hope of the continuance of Populism as an important force had rested in the possibility that in platform and candidate the two dominant parties should again represent compromise on the silver question. The position of the Democratic party now forced the Populist convention, which met in St. Louis late in July, to choose between an acceptance of the Democratic candidate and thus, at best, a considerable loss of party identity, or an insistence upon a separate nomination, and the consequent certain election of the Republican nominee. Such leaders as J. B. Weaver, and W. V. Allen, Senator from Nebraska, advocated the nomination of the Democratic candidate. In doing so, they truly placed principle above party, or perhaps better, achievement of a particular objective, free silver, irrespective of the political means by which it was attained. There were a fourth of the delegates who opposed such a view, southern Populists composing the bulk of these. Thomas E. Watson of Georgia was nominated for the Vice-Presidency, and then Bryan was nominated for the Presidency. Thus there was to be a marked indication of the continued activity of the Populist party as such. And this was carried out by the method of fusion provided by the national committees for the electoral tickets in several states, on which appeared Populists and Democrats, were all pledged to the election of Bryan, but were divided as to the nominee for the Vice-Presidency.

Bryan was accorded, as well, the nomination of the National Silver Party, as was natural, and a group of Republicans, of whom Teller was the spokesman, issued an address advising support of Bryan electors. In the meantime, the Democrats, who had opposed the adoption of the Chicago platform, and those in particular who were the active adherents of the Democratic administration, were without a clearly marked line of action. A number of conferences of leaders were held. Sup-

port of the Chicago nominee was accorded eventually by the rank and file of the party membership throughout the Union, even in the eastern states, but the irreconcilables, and particularly a group in public life, gave their active support to the National Democratic ticket, presented at Indianapolis in September, and headed by John M. Palmer, who indicated the true purpose of the movement, when, soon after the nomination, he said to an audience that he would not feel hurt if they voted directly for McKinley.

The utterances of this Indianapolis convention, and the point of view asserted by its supporters, illustrated anew the confusion, partly designed, partly unconscious, that attends the use of party names in the United States. Despite the overwhelming sentiment of duly elected delegates in the Chicago convention the members of the party gathered at Indianapolis felt free to assert that they constituted the party, that the majority of the delegates at Chicago were Populists rather than Democrats, that "the Democratic party . . . . could not survive a victory won in behalf of the doctrine and policy proclaimed in its name at Chicago," and that their presentation of a ticket was to enable "Democrats throughout the Union to avert disaster from their country and ruin from their party." Of course the purpose of the movement was to enable those who would not vote for Bryan and felt they could not vote for McKinley, to cast a vote on election day. But the one possible influence upon the final result was sure to be the same; whether they voted openly for McKinley, cast their votes for Palmer, or remained at home, their strength was taken from Bryan. At this moment the student of party must consider three aspects of Democracy, the Democratic ticket, the National Democratic protest, and the Cleveland administration. For these constitute three distinct groups of leaders each using the name of Democracy.

The campaign, as has been so often said, was unprece-

dented. The Democratic candidate undertook an extensive speaking tour, or rather several of them, visiting before the end of the canvass twenty-nine states, traveling nearly twenty thousand miles, delivering more than six hundred speeches, and thus reaching directly more voters than had any previous candidate. Moreover, these tours, and the vehement and oftentimes powerful attack of the speaker, made important newspaper copy, which was printed widely, even though the bulk of the press, whatever its former party allegiance, was opposed to the election of Bryan.

The Republican nominee remained at his home where visiting delegations were received and to whom carefully prepared addresses were made. It was a dignified procedure, quite in keeping with the party tradition and the character of the nominee. But it was not inspiriting, and the tendency to indulge in meaningless generalities and acceptable platitudes, coupled with the previous record of McKinley, led to much unrest among the party leaders, notably among those in the East. It was the Republican chairman, Hanna, rather than the candidate, who met the need for an energetic leadership.

In point of time Hanna's first effective measure was the distribution of more than fifteen million copies of campaign documents, and the appearance of a great number of campaign speakers. All this called for financial support, and this need, together with the avowed attempt to solidify the sentiment of the business interests of the country, led Hanna to organize a committee of " 100 millionaires " in Chicago, and, later, one in New York, including John D. Rockefeller, Cornelius Vanderbilt, C. P. Huntington, J. P. Morgan and Andrew Carnegie. This gave increased vigor to the charge that this was a campaign between the rich and the poor. The Republican National Committee expended at least seven and one half million dollars, an unprecedented sum. At the

same time, the Republican nominee, having in mind the initial attack of his opponent, was saying in his letter of acceptance, "All attempt to array class against class, the classes against the masses, section against section, labor against capital, poor against rich, or interest against interest, is in the highest degree reprehensible."

"Collecting money for a political party must be regarded differently from getting means for the support of a church, a university or a charitable institution and, according to the cynical view of politics that obtains in certain quarters, the corruption of voters seems to inhere in the use of the party chest. But many voters looked upon the Republican party as something sacred, whose control was necessary to the well-being and perpetuity of the Republic. The man who raised money in order to insure its continuance in power was looked upon by them as doing holy work. Some such idea must have passed through Hanna's mind when, without concealment, he continually preached the use of money to save the party." [10]

The uncertainty as to the outcome of the campaign was caused most of all by the generally accepted weakening of party ties. The appeal of the Chicago convention and that of its nominee had been to all men irrespective of party. But Bryan in his tours in South and East spent much time in attempting to solidify the Democratic support. The Democratic National Committee worked with Bryan. Eventually the Democratic state organizations supported the ticket in every state.

The strategy of the Republican managers was directed toward a victory in the industrial centers and populous states, where the party organization was strongest and where the appeal of the party fell on most willing ears.

Long reliance upon two dominant parties had accustomed

[10] J. F. Rhodes, *The McKinley and Roosevelt Administrations*, 7.

men to speak of an easy acceptance of either as an evidence of non-partizanship.   In this comfortable attitude a considerable body of voters had been, as we have seen, developing a so-called "independence" in politics.   But the issue, as drawn by the leadership of Bryan, brought to surface a type of partizanship which only subsequent years could properly identify. A prominent eastern clergyman declared that "this pulpit is absolutely non-partizan, but it is positively patriotic and Christian.   It does not stand for party, but as long as it stands for Christ it must stand for principles.   I shall denounce the Chicago platform.   That platform was made in Hell." Even after the result of the election was known, it could be said by a careful observer that, "Probably no man in civil life has succeeded in inspiring so much terror without taking life as has Bryan."   Surely neither the platform, nor the utterance of the candidate seem after the lapse of years to warrant such statements.   Bryan was uttering what was the common currency of everyday conversation when he said in Washington, D. C., "These men [Cleveland and his cabinet] are the public servants of the American people, and they have no more right to betray the people into the hands of the financiers of London than Benedict Arnold had to betray the American colonies into the hands of the British."

"Whatever our private wishes may be," wrote the editor of the *Spectator* a year later, "we do not see how the United States are to escape a tremendous conflict in which the "masses" will be arrayed against the rich men.   Every indication points that way, and the demand for free coinage was merely a trace on the surface, the crude beginning of a very serious movement.   Of that movement itself we say nothing.   Violent and dangerous as it is in some of its forms, we must hold the party in power, the party of organized and concentrated wealth, as mainly responsible for having brought it into being; and next to that responsibility would seem to lie with the

easy-going and supine class whose existence never fails to strike with wonder the visitor from Europe. If such a party of discontent shows itself formidable—possibly even victorious in 1900—it might do worse than take up the old Democratic name with its associations and its undoubtedly excellent sound. In this sense, then, but only in this sense, the evolution of the Democratic party is towards a quasi-revolutionary collectivism, not of the logical Marxian kind, but of a certain practical western variety. It will express itself in political and social and economic demands. Its political program will include the referendum, and the direct election of Senators by the people, and it will try to deal with the abuse of the power of injunction. Its chief economic demand will, in our judgment, be for progressive and direct taxation, and for the public ownership of railways and the municipal ownership of all local monopolies. The program does not perhaps sound revolutionary, but its adoption would largely transform the character of the American republic. We venture to think that either Mr. Bryan will find it needful to move in this direction, or that, when the 1900 convention comes, it will find him deserted by his followers." [11]

Theodore Roosevelt was moved to say, "Savages do not like an independent and upright judiciary. They want the judge to decide their way, and if he does not, they want to behead him. The Populists experience the same emotion when they realize that the judiciary stands between them and plunder." [12] But writing from Chicago, William V. Moody said: "Living here in the heart of the debtor's country I have come to see that the present regime cannot possibly endure. Free silver is undoubtedly a desperate remedy—perhaps an insane one, but the slow asphyxiation which the vast farming

---

[11] "Future of Democracy," *Spectator* (London), (September 11, 1897), LXXIX, 332.

[12] *Review of Reviews* (November, 1896).

population of the West is undergoing from the appreciation of deferred payments on their gigantic debt, due to the inadequacy of the maximum gold coinage to keep pace with the growth of values—calls for immediate relief of some sort." [13]

Early in the campaign so strong had been the hostile feeling between the East and West that two United States senators, Allen of Nebraska and Teller of Colorado, felt called upon to express the loyalty of the West to the nation and to disclaim any thought of an independent existence. The metropolitan press was bitter; its attacks upon Bryan were unprecedented in vituperation and vindictiveness. The depth of the misunderstanding can be revealed in no better way than by quoting from a speech delivered in Boston by Senator Hoar of Massachusetts some three weeks after the election:

"It is certainly a sad thing to think that states like Kansas and Nebraska, children of New England, that have great farming populations, where we expect to find, if we find anywhere, sobriety, integrity, steadiness, conservatism, the great communities where churches abound and where schools are the best in the world, should have lent themselves to this crazy attempt at revolution and this passionate crusade of dishonor."

Apparently it was uncertainty as to the intention of the voter that gave such an outlook. The country had been in distress. To many a voter it was a change in the tariff or money policy that was to aid him. To these came with particular force the Republican campaign cry, "McKinley the Advance Agent of Prosperity," but party agencies had broken under the strain and the mood of the electorate was uncertain and signs were ominous.

There was additional evidence that the insurgency of Bryan was not akin to the independence of the typical independent in the years 1870–1890. The Chicago platform had opposed

[13] Letters of W. V. Moody, in *The Atlantic Monthly* (September, 1913).

"life tenure in the public service," and the candidate had said of it, "What we oppose in that plank is the life tenure which is being built up in Washington, which excludes from participation in the benefits, the humbler members of our society." He was reported to have said that he was not as yet engaged in distributing post offices, but he hoped soon to be. The Civil Service Reform League came out in opposition to the Democratic candidate in October.

The presidential vote of 1896, most important in a half century of party history, was then cast at the close of a most unusual campaign. The issue was clear-cut upon a question that had agitated the electorate for more than a generation, but upon which no definite decision had hitherto been possible. The Republican party had finally declared, "We are opposed to the free coinage of silver except by international agreement with the leading commercial nations of the world, which we pledge ourselves to promote, and until such agreement can be obtained the existing gold standard must be preserved." The Democratic party in its turn had at its Chicago convention declared "We demand the free and unlimited coinage of both silver and gold at the present ratio of sixteen to one without waiting for the aid or consent of any other nation."

By the adoption of the platform, the Democratic party not only had taken up the fight for the free coinage of silver, but also had declared itself the party of protest upon economic questions, which arose out of deeper sources of discontent. The platform inadequately expressed the intense feeling of those who adopted it, for no campaign document could mirror their belief that they were engaged in a fight for freedom. There had been declarations in favor of an income tax and a stricter control of monopoly. They had continued to advocate a non-protective tariff. They had denounced "government by injunction," censured the judiciary, and threatened

its independence. Yet the adoption of the entire program of the Populist party, had this occurred, would have been unimportant compared with a simple declaration of a determination to free the hewers of wood and the drawers of water from an economic bondage to a money oligarchy. Except for the advocacy of free silver, which had been declared the paramount issue, remedies and methods were to wait upon that time when the masses had taken control of their government. Finally the Democratic party had waged a campaign under aggressive leadership.

Amid such change and impending change, unusual interest had been aroused finally by the expectation of a large increase in votes and unprecedented efforts made by the two great parties to secure the increase and to attract the independents recently estranged from their traditional groups. At the very close of the campaign the actual vote was subject to two final and perhaps determining influences. Established business threw the weight of its influence against the Democratic ticket by the prophecies made to employees as to the probable results of a Bryan victory. The phenomena was too general and too widespread not to have been premeditated and planned. Moreover, the price of wheat had advanced, and better times appeared to be at hand.

The total vote was 13,952,179, fulfilling expectations, for it was two million more than cast in 1892. Bryan polled 6,533,080 votes, nearly a million more than had been cast for Cleveland in 1892, and more than the Democracy polled in any subsequent election for twenty years. This increase was general throughout the Union except in the northeastern section where Bryan's vote fell 325,000 below that cast for Cleveland in 1892. The Democratic majorities were largest in Texas and Colorado. Bryan carried twenty-two states, twelve of them in the South and ten in the more recently settled trans-Missouri West. In spite of a greatly increased

Democratic vote throughout the Ohio River valley, Bryan failed to carry any state in the older section of the Middle West.

A more minute analysis of the vote shows that little more than a third of the Democratic vote was cast in the states carried by Bryan. These twenty-two states had dictated the platform and named the candidate. There were 4,109,652 Democratic votes in the states carried by McKinley and of these more than 2,000,000 were cast in the Middle West and 1,500,000 in five states, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware and Maryland. A sectional ticket was accorded a national vote. Of course the decisive Democratic vote was sectional. Although of the 2760 counties in the United States Bryan led McKinley in 1617, these majorities were distributed as follows: In New England Bryan carried no county, in the Middle section nineteen, in the older Middle West 134, in the trans-Mississippi West 204, in the Far West 214, and in the fifteen states of the South 1046. McKinley carried only 1143 counties, but they were in sections of country of densest population. Bryan carried only one city of any size, New Orleans. There is every reason to accept the usual view that the Democracy of 1896 had its appeal in mining and agricultural regions of the nation; particularly in localities of a sparse population and in areas recently settled.

The vote for the Republican ticket was 7,107,304. This exceeded the vote for Harrison in 1892 by about two million. In New England the Republican vote was overwhelming. McKinley's total popular vote exceeded Bryan's total vote by 600,000. It has been shown that of the six and one half million votes cast for Bryan, about four and one half million were cast on fusion electoral tickets. The Populist party seems to have been weaker than in 1892, and of course, as a result of the defeat of its greatest effort it now entered a period of rapid

decline. It had a representation of 27 in the House of Representatives at the opening of the McKinley administration, but this number lessened rapidly and disappeared entirely in 1903. In the campaign of 1900 the Populist leaders divided upon the question of fusion with the Democrats. There was a separate nomination and 50,000 votes. In 1904 there was a formal dissolution of the fusion with the Democracy, but the reorganized Populist party won only 114,000 votes. There was a nomination in 1908, and a small convention in 1912, which made no nominations. Thus did this "party"die.

## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

General political background in Rhodes and Ford and Dewey, cited in previous chapter.

Much material to be found in Herbert Croly, *Marcus A. Hanna, His Life and Work* (1912); also see C. S. Olcott, *Life of William McKinley* (1916); Robert McElroy, *Grover Cleveland* (1923); W. D. Orcutt, *Burrows of Michigan and the Republican Party* (1917).

Important contributions by participants are to be found in Grover Cleveland, *Presidential Problems* (1904); W. J. Bryan, *The First Battle* (1896); J. B. Foraker, *Notes of a Busy Life* (1915).

Contemporary critical summary in Woodrow Wilson, "Mr. Cleveland as President," in *Atlantic Monthly*, March, 1897.

Manuscript in the Stanford University Library, the monograph of E. A. Stearns, *The Campaign of 1896* (1915).

For a survey and evaluation of underlying causes see F. J. Turner, *The Frontier in American History*, in particular, Chapters 7, 8, 9. See also, W. J. Trimble, "The Passing of the Public Lands," in *Atlantic Monthly* (June, 1914), cxiii, 755.

"The work of internal government has become the task of controlling these men, who are socially as remote as heathen gods, alone worth knowing, but never known, and who could tell nothing of political value if one skinned them alive. Most of them have nothing to tell, but are forces as dumb as their dynamos, absorbed in the development or economy of power. They are trustees for the public, and whenever society assumes the property, it must confer on them that title; but the power will remain as before, whoever manages it, and will then control society without appeal, as it controls its stokers and pit-men. Modern politics is, at bottom, a struggle not of men but of forces."

*The Education of Henry Adams*, 421.

# CHAPTER XIV

## DOMINANCE OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY

A new era in party history—The accepted view of party organization—McKinley's place—The spirit of those in power—The Democratic division—Republican organization—The party division on the Cuban question—The issues of the war—New alignments—The elections of 1898—Republican control—The position of the Republican organization in 1900—The Democratic party in 1900—The vote of protest—The election of 1900—The triumph of the Republicans—Possibility of a change in party alignments—Succession of Roosevelt.

STRUGGLE, confusion, incoherence had been characteristic of party life in the period 1877–1897. Political revolt, both within and without the two parties, had been continuous. The year 1897 marked the end of this period of party confusion, and, as well, the opening of one in which for a dozen years there was party supremacy, and, on the whole, party tranquillity.

The Republican opportunity in 1897 was exceptional. Not since 1875, except for the years 1889–1891, had the party secured adequate control of both branches of the Congress, as well as the Presidency. And it was a vigorous as well as a triumphant party organization which took control of the national government on March 4, 1897. It had acquired far greater influence in the course of the campaign of 1896 than had usually been accorded a party organization. Intensity of feeling had seemed an excuse for greater concentration of power, and success evoked feelings of gratitude as well as a feeling of security. Acceptance of party organization as a necessity had long been agreed upon, but no considerable body of voters had thought of it in the way that it had appeared to party boss and to the experienced party worker.

Bryce could write in 1894 "It is only occasionally and incidentally that we have had to consider the influence upon political bodies and methods of those extra-legal groupings of men called political parties." [1]

Yet the national committeemen who made up the national committee had long come to regard themselves as constituting the party. It was left to the campaign of 1896 to make generally acceptable to a large proportion of the electorate, at least for the time being, the thought of a reputable party organization, quite apart from the business of governing, and given over to the task of seeing to it that the electorate left the business of governing in the hands of those who "knew how" and who could be depended upon to be "safe and sane." It was the natural result of the reawakening of a considerable body of business men to a realization of their weakness in point of numbers, and their conviction that they had much to fear from the response of the populace to the leadership of men who were disposed to experiment in government. If party was to be a stabilizing influence in the future, as it had been in the past, it must be by developing greater powers in directing the currents of public opinion. Occasional and unprofessional activity would no longer suffice. Nor could dependence be upon members of the party in public office. Large scale problems demanded efficiency, and, above all, a continuous service. Hanna had represented the increased power of the national committee in 1896. In the following years until his death in 1904, he and his associates were the party organization.[2]

---

[1] *The American Commonwealth*, II, 3.

[2] Because of later developments, it is of some interest to note that in February of 1897 at the University of Chicago under the title of "The Menace of the Political Machine," an ex-Congressman, R. M. La Follette, was saying: "Go back to the first principles of democracy; go back to the people. Substitute for both caucus and convention a primary election. . . . Then every citizen will share equally. . . ." R. M. La Follette, *Autobiography*, 197.

The new President was a man of experience in the national government, although it had been, all of it, congressional experience. He had been elected to Congress in 1876, and with the exception of one break, 1883-1885, had represented his district until 1891, during a period in which the increase of revenue raised repeatedly and with increasing emphasis the question of tariff revision, a subject to which he gave almost undivided attention. During these twelve years of congressional service he had been of the majority party in only one Congress, that of the years 1889-1891. The McKinley Bill, the fruit of that opportunity, had led to his defeat. In 1891 he had been elected governor of Ohio, and the following year had received considerable support for the Presidency in the national convention. In the congressional campaign of 1891 he had toured sixteen states, addressing in the course of five weeks nearly four hundred audiences. The outcome of these elections seemed to him, and particularly to those who were anxious to raise him to the Presidency, a vindication for the defeat of 1890. He appeared then, as he would have liked, "as the guardian angel in the halls of Congress of the industries of the country." A western colleague had first termed him the advance agent of prosperity, and now he came to his great opportunity.

Henry Adams wrote of McKinley as President "He undertook to pool interests in a general trust into which every interest should be taken, more or less at its own valuation, and whose mass should under his management, create efficiency. And," added Adams, "he achieved very remarkable results." [3] There is, of course, ample evidence of the ability of McKinley to turn the work of other men into the channels of public activity. He called Elihu Root to the War Department "to look after the islands", and William H. Taft to go to the Phillippines. He sent John Hay to London and

[3] *The Education of Henry Adams*, 373.

later called him to be Secretary of State.. Yet although tactful to a degree unusual even among politicians, and the embodiment as "Major" McKinley of the vestiges of the Civil War traditions of the party, he must have failed of the very unusual success attending his efforts, had he not had, what none of his immediate predecessors had, a group of powerful party leaders in agreement upon the general purpose of the administration, and, back of them all, an alert and supporting public opinion. For the time being, notwithstanding the presence and influence of a group of silver Republican senators, the Republican majorities qualified to a degree unusual in the United States for Burke's definition of party as "a body of men united for promoting by their joint endeavors the national interest upon some particular principle in which they all agree."

Even prior to the inauguration of McKinley there was evidence of the spirit in which the triumphant party would proceed to work its will. Hearings upon the proposed revision of the tariff were held, and the substance of a tariff measure prepared. In the Senate a group of Republican senators from New England took control of the Senate proceedings, a control that they were not to relinquish for fifteen years.

The attitude of prominent Republicans was shown in the remark of Senator Chandler of New Hampshire, who said, in opposing the consideration of a resolution providing for the popular elections of senators, "I had supposed that this Populist idea would disappear after the election of last November." Somewhat later while discussing the "Free Homestead Bill," Senator Allen, a Populist of Nebraska, pointed out that the principle of the bill had been included in both Republican and Democratic platforms in the preceding campaign. Senator Platt of Connecticut took the floor to say, "We all understand how matters creep into national platforms, and I venture to say that when that resolution and that platform

were adopted there were not fifty delegates in the St. Louis convention that paid any attention to it or knew what it was about, or had any idea what it involved." Senator Allen queried, "But are they not bound by it?" Senator Platt, "I am not." Seeking to uncover the position of those Democrats who had refused to support the Chicago platform, Senator Allen provoked Senator Vilas, of Wisconsin, to say, "There is almost nothing in the platform to which the Senator alludes which I do not consider inimical to the welfare of the people of the United States."

At the same time Senator Hill, who had led the anti-silver delegates at Chicago, came forward as a reorganizer of the Democracy. In a widely quoted paper, published late in February, the senator from New York outlined his view of the situation. After designating the declaration for an income tax, the attack upon the Supreme Court and four minor planks as "offensive provisions, or provisions of doubtful expediency, or especially those of a revolutionary and unprecedented character," he enumerated the "mistakes that must not be repeated." He declared that in reorganization, the objectionable features of the Chicago platform were to be abandoned, conservatism was to replace radicalism, selfish interests of sectionalism were to give way to the best interests of the whole country, conciliation was to displace ostracism, there was to be a broad and liberal policy in party management and greater freedom of opinion, and, in returning to the fundamental principles of Democracy, an unholy alliance with the Populists was to be avoided, agrarian and Socialistic tendencies to be checked, and a disavowal made of paternalistic doctrines. Such a view obviously conceived of party as an agency in government rather than an organization of men of like beliefs.

When McKinley took oath of office he justified expectations both in the inaugural and in the cabinet then formally

announced. The party had received a mandate to raise revenue and to protect American industry. This was the President's first concern. A special session of the Congress was summoned to meet on the fifteenth of the month. In his cabinet were men of substance and success. John Sherman, who became Secretary of State, embodied the sound money traditions of the party, and Lyman Gage, who was called to be Secretary of the Treasury, insured the insistence upon the gold standard. The members of the cabinet came from Ohio, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, Maryland, California, and Iowa. Hanna, declining a place in the Cabinet, soon became by appointment, and later by election, Senator from Ohio. When the House met it again elected Reed as Speaker. The Dingley tariff bill was easily passed through the House, more leisurely considered in the Senate, where, despite the work of Nelson W. Aldrich, who agreed with Dingley that it was to be a moderate tariff, it was greatly changed, and after conference and reconsideration by both Houses, it finally became law on July 24, 1897. "The most thorough-going protective measure in American history, it marked the complete identification of the Republican party with the business interest of the nation." Democratic opposition was perfunctory, and Republican dissensions unimportant. In the country at large, where there was little interest, such a development was taken as a matter of course.

The tariff session gave the Democrats in public office an opportunity to take stock. They were overwhelmed in both Houses and their representation was sectional; 24 of the 30 senators and 93 of the 123 representatives were from the South. Their attacks upon Republican procedure lacked force, and the dominant party, still dependent for control of the Senate upon Silver Republicans, pursued as yet a conciliatory policy on the financial issue.

As the state elections came on in the autumn, Democratic interest revived. It was soon evident that the radical Democrats were in absolute control. The Colorado state convention declared: "We expressly declare our opposition to any movement which may be construed as a waiver of that issue [free silver] and pledge ourselves to do all in our power, whether alone or in conjunction with others who believe the same thing, to defeat any candidate who accepts a nomination by those who are opposed to the principles of the Chicago platform." After this declaration little was heard of reorganization until after the second defeat of Bryan.

McKinley inherited from Cleveland a problem of great uncertainty in the shape of our relationship with Spain in matters involving the island of Cuba. These had greatly agitated the Congress ever since the outbreak of the insurrection in 1895, and although the public interest in the matter had abated during the course of the political campaign of 1896, there was renewal of interest in the winter of 1896–7. From the outset, the policy of Cleveland had been one of strictest neutrality, but a majority of Democrats in both Senate and House had favored a formal recognition of the belligerency of the Cubans. Cleveland had ultimately offered to mediate between the insurgents and the government of Spain, but his offer had been refused. The Democrats in Congress then moved to a point where they were prepared to recognize the independence of the Cubans, but Cleveland refused to take such action. The platform of the party in 1896 had gone no further than an extension of sympathy to the people of Cuba in their struggle for independence, but Democrats in the final session of the Cleveland administration again called for a recognition of belligerency.

Republicans in Congress had in 1895 favored the recognition of the independence of the Cubans, and in the party platform of 1896, they had not only expressed the hope that the Cubans

would win in their struggle for liberty, but they also urged that "the government of the United States should actively use its influence and good offices to restore peace and give independence to the island." In his inaugural McKinley indicated his unwillingness to take steps that might be looked upon as calling for a war of conquest. During the summer and fall he made repeated efforts to reach an agreement with the Spanish government, and although progress was slow and the outcome uncertain, McKinley maintained his position and urged upon Congress in his first annual message that the United States still refrain from independent action. But the demand for active intervention became strong, particularly after the De Lome incident and the destruction of the *Maine*. Nevertheless McKinley's adroit diplomacy seemed about to be crowned with success, when on May 31st he suddenly decided to cease negotiations with Spain, and to turn the matter over to Congress. He did this because of his fear that delay, and insistence upon his course, would break up the Republican majorities. McKinley felt, as he so often did, that the will of his party was paramount and it seemed to him to call for war. Yet there were powerful forces behind him in his earlier policy and had he revealed the extent of his success with Spain and essayed to fight for a continuance of the use of diplomacy, the outcome might have been quite different.

The President in April, 1898, recommended the intervention of the United States, and the Congress eagerly declared the war that for many months the words of the members of both parties had made to seem as desirable as it now seemed inevitable. There was disagreement as to the form of the resolution, and the division within the membership of both of the parties was marked. In both Senate and House the main line of division was between the Democrats who favored a recognition of the independence of the Republic of Cuba, and Republicans who declared that it was intervention that was

to make possible a stable and independent government. There was agreement in the acceptance of the declaration after pacification had been accomplished, "to leave the government and control of the island to its people."

Despite the Democratic party support of the war with Spain and the acquiescence in the war measures of the McKinley administration, there was, in addition to the expected manœuverings of an opposition party, immediate evidence in the summer of 1898 that in questions growing out of the war there was to be an enduring party division. At the outset it seemed to many that such questions must split the membership of both parties. This division had appeared in the consideration of the annexation of the Hawaiian Islands, which came up in the course of the tariff session when treatment of the sugar schedule involved this possibility. In June President McKinley submitted a treaty of annexation. It is to be remembered that a treaty of annexation had been negotiated by President Harrison in 1893, and that President Cleveland had withdrawn the treaty. When the matter arose again in 1897 all but one of the Democrats in the Senate were shown to be opposed, and there was a similar attitude among the Democrats in the House. The Democratic arguments stressed the break in our traditional policy and the fact that it was a move actively backed by the sugar interests. The Republicans who came as a party to favor such annexation at this time made much of military and commercial necessity. So strong was the opposition that a two thirds vote proved impossible. Then in the summer of 1898 by joint resolution the Republic of Hawaii was annexed to the United States.

It has been asserted and there has been general agreement, that "no thought of conquest in the Philippines or elsewhere preceded the Spanish war, and no serious desire to begin a colonial system was in evidence." Yet the conquest of Porto Rico and capture of Manila in the Phillippines, accomplished

though they were in the course of "a war to liberate Cuba," raised questions of disposition that had to be answered. The probable position of each of the great parties has been suggested, yet it was apparent that there was a dissent in each membership, and in the case of the ruling party a disagreement serious enough to promise a realignment of some of the most powerful leaders.

The country entered the congressional campaign of 1898 before the close of the war. Most of the state platforms were prepared between the signing of the armistice and the meeting of the peace commissioners. These platforms differed widely in the recommendations as to the peace and the disposition of the fruits of victory. A poll of the newspapers of the country taken late in the year showed that an overwhelming majority of their owners favored what was termed expansion, although it was noticeable that the proportion was greater in the case of the Republican papers. The majority of the Democratic candidates for Congress indorsed the Chicago platform of 1896. In the West the Democrats lost twelve districts, owing partly to returning prosperity, but more to the popularity of the war. In the East and South, in traditional Democratic areas, the Democrats elected forty-one more representatives than in 1896. This was a net gain of twenty-nine for the Democratic party, but it was more than offset by a loss of eight seats in the Senate.

An Anti-Imperialistic league was formed in November, and in a letter to its members ex-President Cleveland declared himself opposed to "American Imperialism" and to the pending American expansion. Senator Gray, the Democratic member of the Peace Commission, opposed the cession of the Philippines. Such Republican leaders as Speaker Reed and Senator Hoar made it known that they were seriously opposed. Of the Commissioners sent to Paris, Senators Frye and Davis, together with Whitelaw Reid, were expansionists and although

Secretary Day was chairman of the Commission, his memorandum, prepared at the time of the protocol, providing for relinquishment of the islands, had been rejected by McKinley.  The administration called for the cession of the Philippines and Spain was forced to yield.  The treaty, signed at Paris in December, was submitted to the Senate when it reassembled in January.  Debate upon the treaty had begun in December, and it revealed the opposition of the Democrats.  There was, however, disagreement as to the method of opposition.  One group wished to defeat the treaty and thus to have done with at once the possibility of a colonial system.  The other group, smaller in number, advocated the ratification of the treaty and then a declaration of purpose in the Philippines, similar to the policy that had been undertaken in the case of Cuba.  This group was supported by Mr. Bryan, who, mustered out of service as colonel of one of the Nebraska regiments, signalized his reëntrance upon the political scene by calling for a campaign against colonialism.  The issue of 1900 was foreshadowed, not on the matter of the defeat of a treaty, but of the disposition of the results of the treaty.  Party lines were broken when the vote was taken on ratification.  Ten Democrats and five Populists voted with the Republican majority.  Four Republicans and one Populist voted with twenty-two Democrats in opposition.  It was then proposed by the Democratic minority that the Senate declare that it was the purpose of the United States to leave  the control of the islands to the inhabitants when a stable and independent government had been erected.  Only two Democrats voted against this resolution and it was defeated only by the casting vote of the Vice-President.  An indefinite promise of subsequent consideration was then voted by the Senate.

As a result of the elections of 1898 the Republican majorities were sufficiently changed in personnel to make possible

in the new Congress which met in December of 1899 a Republican party support of the gold standard, and in his message the President called for a fulfillment of the pledge of 1896. The debate revealed little dissent and the bill became law on March 14, 1900. Neither this enactment nor that upon the tariff were accepted as issues by the Democrats in the ensuing campaign. This was a decided break in the party practice of recent years, and the more marked because of the intensity of the struggle in 1896. But the nation as a whole was enjoying unusual prosperity, and the events of 1898 had so focused public attention that a consideration of foreign policy was made inevitable. The Democratic state platforms of 1899 united in condemning the war upon the Filipinos as a war of aggression, and in calling for a political war upon militarism and imperialism.

It was natural that so successful a party administration as had been that of McKinley and Hanna should wish to stand upon its record in office. The platform adopted at Philadelphia in June of 1900 pointed to the fact that pledges had been fulfilled; moreover that the country was prosperous; made much of the incapacity and lack of unity of their opponents; and suggested the wisdom of letting well enough alone. Despite an undercurrent of opposition, caused partly by the dissatisfaction of such leaders as Reed and Hoar with the colonial policies of the administration, and partly by the opposition of such party bosses as Platt and Quay to the leadership of Hanna, the convention was a unit in the renomination of McKinley. Quay carried his opposition to the floor of the convention, but the issue did not come to a head.[4] The fact of a score of aspirants for the Vice-Presidential nomination indicated the lack of serious divisions within the party membership, and also the lack of consideration for the office. Theodore Roosevelt, who in 1898 had been elected governor

[4] See Official Proceedings of the Republican National Convention, 96-98.

of New York, was supported for the Vice-Presidency by Platt, who was anxious to get him out of state politics, and by a large and enthusiastic body of sentiment among delegates from western states. In the end the popular support decided the matter and Roosevelt was nominated. Hanna did not desire the nomination of Roosevelt nor did McKinley. Hanna bowed to the will of the convention. But one may be sure that had it been the question of nomination for the Presidency there would have been no such acquiescence.

The Democratic party entered the campaign of 1900 with lessened enthusiasm. The country appeared in a prosperous condition. The Republican nominee had been a "war President." It seemed an inopportune time to criticize foreign policy or revive dispute as to domestic policy. Yet it was to be done. The battleground chosen by Bryan in advance of the convention was one in which the protagonists were "Plutocracy and Democracy." As he saw it, the battle was fundamentally the same, whether the immediate issue was free silver, control of the trusts, or "imperialism."

The platform of 1900 indorsed the silver plank of the Chicago platform. But of greater importance, both to the convention and in the campaign, was the emphasis placed upon other issues upon which the Democracy represented discontent. "The burning issue of imperialism" was declared the paramount question, but it was noted that the war of aggression in the Philippines had been brought on by "greedy commercialism," and nearly as much space and more severe denunciation was given on the "trust question." The indictment was bitterly stated:

"Private monopolies are indefensible and intolerable. They destroy competition, control the price of raw material and of the finished product, thus robbing both producer and consumer. They lessen the employment of labor and arbitrarily fix the terms and conditions thereof; and deprive individual

energy and small capital of their opportunities for betterment. They are the most efficient means yet devised for appropriating the fruits of industry to the benefit of a few at the expense of the many, and, unless their insatiate greed is checked, all wealth will be aggregated in a few hands and the Republic destroyed. . . . We pledge the Democratic party to an increasing warfare in nation, state, and city against private monopoly in every form." The platform further called for "the election of United States Senators by direct vote of the people. . . . and direct legislation wherever practicable." The party was still opposed to "government by injunction."

Yet in spite of the content of this platform and the renomination of the militant leader of 1896, there were evidences that the Democratic party was in reality less radical than its professions indicated. The editor of *The Nation* felt that Bryan's hold upon the party was unprecedented, and that it was due to change in membership in 1896. Yet it was only after a struggle that the anti-monopoly planks were included and in the heated discussion that arose in the committee over the reaffirmation of the silver platform many of the prominent silver men of 1896 fought for silence or compromise. It was indorsed by a majority of two in the committee, and only because of the insistence of the prospective nominee. Ex-Senator Hill of New York seconded the nomination of Bryan, Richard Croker of Tammany Hall was much in evidence at Kansas City, and Edward Shepard and Bourke Cochran, who had bolted in 1896, came to the support of the ticket. The nomination of Hill for Vice-President was prevented only by his refusal to accept, and the party regulars were well pleased with the selection of Adlai E. Stevenson of Illinois. There was light in the comment of an unfriendly correspondent who wrote, "of the eastern delegates—those east of Ohio—the prevailing type was that of the city politician whom no consideration of humanity, truth, or justice could

force to break with their party." Most of all, a portion of the preamble of the platform seemed strange reading to certain of the elements whose expectations had been thoroughly aroused by the Democratic campaign of 1896: "We hold with the United States Supreme Court that the Declaration of Independence is the spirit of our government, of which the Constitution is the form and letter."

Bryan devoted his acceptance speech to the subject of "imperialism." He pledged himself to call Congress in extra session and to urge for the Philippine islands a stable form of government, a prospective independence, and a promise of continued American protection. Upon so high a plane did the candidate place his argument that Charles Francis Adams was moved to write later that "it seemed for the moment as if the party in power would be forced to reckon seriously with the opposition throughout a sustained debate." [5] This subject was soon submerged, but the debate has broken out periodically in subsequent years. It was, as Adams saw it, the sixth great debate in our national history. [6] It is of interest to note that no one of the debates caused at its inception a clean-cut division between existing political parties.

This spectacle of Democratic "fit to win" spirit, coupled with the record of Democratic representatives in Congress, convinced thousands that the Democratic party was not, after all, the agency for thorough-going change. A portion of the Populists refused to indorse the Democratic ticket and cast 49,000 votes for Wharton Barker. This in spite of

---

[5] C. F. Adams, in *American Historical Association Report* (1901), I, 52.

[6] " . . . since 1840 there have been only six real debates; the average period of the debate being, therefore, ten years. These debates were (1) that over Slavery, from 1844–1864; (2) that over Reconstruction, from 1868–1872; (3) Legal Tenure, or "Fiat Money," and Resumption were the issues in 1876 and 1880; (4) the issue of 1888 and 1892 was over Protection and Free Trade; (5) the debate over Bi-metallism and the Demoralization of Silver occurred in 1896; and finally (6) Imperialism, as it is called, came to the front in 1900."

Bryan's acceptance letter which had alarmed many conservatives. The Socialist Labor party held its vote of 1896. The Social Democratic Party with Eugene Debs as candidate appeared for the first time in a national election and in thirty-two states polled nearly 100,000 votes. Bryan's vote was 142,000 less than in 1896 and he carried only seventeen states, losing Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming, and Washington, which he had carried in 1896. His vote declined in all except one of the states which he had carried four years before. This loss amounted to 500,000 votes. It was nearly offset by gains made in the northeastern states amounting to 380,000 votes.

A loss in the western states had been anticipated by Bryan had the party refused to reaffirm its stand upon silver, and a gain in the northeastern states had been foreseen by Hill, had the party permitted that issue to be ignored. The result would seem to indicate that in both West and East a considerable portion of the electorate was impressed with the returning conservatism of the party in spite of its professions in the platform and its choice of a standard-bearer.

As a result of the elections in the fall of 1900 the Democrats gained three seats in the Senate and had their House membership cut down by ten. For the first time since 1876 a ruling party had won a third consecutive congressional election. The Republican party organization appeared to have a greater unity than at any previous time in its history. Moreover, it had control of the national government by a series of popular mandates that were impressive by reason of the efforts made to change them. The outlook for a party of protest was not promising.

By the outcome of the elections of 1900 "the Republicans had received a clear mandate to govern the country in the interests of business expansion." Judging by the experience of four years, if there was difficulty on the part of the control-

ling party in carrying out this mandate, it would not be because of the failure of the titular leader of the party.   He was in closest sympathy with Hanna, he had again and again indicated his willingness to coöperate with those in power in Congress.   Champ Clark spoke of McKinley understanding "all the little ways of Congress,"—and consequently his relationship with his party associates in Congress was remarkable for its cordiality.

Standing as the Democratic party did between the settled conservatism of the Republican party, that had never been more evident than at the second inauguration of McKinley, and the increasing number of those who were turning to a consideration of the teachings of Socialism, it was natural that there should be very great uncertainty as to its most effective course.   The second defeat of Bryan gave the conservative Democrats the opportunity that had eluded them throughout the first term of McKinley's administration.   Eastern Democrats pointed out the undeniable fact that as the Democracy had been led it had failed to secure a support of a majority of voters.   To the average politician the obvious course to pursue was to change leaders, for by 1901 Bryan had become to the mass of voters the embodiment of the new Democracy, and to retire him would in the public mind change the character of the party.   In a sense this was true, for his relinquishment of the leadership for the reasons given would inevitably give place to some one of the Democratic leaders who had not found the platform of 1896 to his liking.   This current of public opinion was particularly strong in the months immediately following the election.   But it was soon pointed out that the hope of the Democracy rested in greater, not less, radicalism.   The Republican party was as definitely marked the party of wealth and conservatism as the Democracy was stamped as the party of protest.   An aspect of Democracy sometimes overlooked was in October of 1900 thus stated by

A. D. Morse: "On the whole it seems fair to conclude that the greatest services of the Democratic party have been in the line of political education. . . . It has done more to Americanize the foreigner, to transform the alien into a citizen, than all other parties."[7]  Various minor parties were pointing to the need of greater safeguards for democracy.  The call was for a major party of continued protest.  It seemed clear that the Democratic party ought to invade the domain of the Socialists, that, in addition to its previous "reforms," it should urge, among other things, the government ownership of monopolies.  This view gained ground until some months after Roosevelt succeeded McKinley.

The assassination of McKinley by an anarchist served to emphasize the increase of the number of members of the community who refused to accept the American system of government.  Lincoln had suffered death because of the passion of war between the states.  Garfield had been shot by a disappointed office seeker.  But in 1901 it was not hatred of the union nor thirst for party power, but a dissatisfaction with government itself which had led to the tragedy.

### BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

General political background in C. R. Fish, *The Path of Empire* (1919); J. H. Latane, *America as a World Power* (1907).

See also J. F. Rhodes, *The McKinley and Roosevelt Administrations* (1922).

The Republican material for these years is ample.  See in particular, Croly's, *Hanna and Olcott's McKinley*, cited in the previous chapter; also W. R. Thayer, *Life and Letters of John Hay* (1915); G. F. Hoar, *Autobiography* (1903); Royal Cortissoz, *Life of Whitelaw Reid* (1921).

See also, A. W. Dunn, *From Harrison to Harding* (1922); H. H. Kohlsaat, *From McKinley to Harding* (1923).

[7] *Parties and Party Leaders*, 204-5

The Democratic material is less plentiful.   Bryan's week by week comment may be found in *The Commoner* (condensed), I–IV; *also,* W. J. Bryan, *The Second Battle* (1900).

Special studies include W. H. Allen, "The Election of 1900," in *Annals of the American Academy*, XVIII, 53; W. G. Brown, "Defense of American Parties," in *The Atlantic Monthly*, CVI, 577.

An outstanding contribution is H. F. Goswell, *Boss Platt and the New York Machine* (1923).

Also, in manuscript in Stanford University Library, the following monographs: F. M. Preston, *Dolliver in the House of Representatives, 1889–1900* (1918); M. E. Bennett, *The Foreign Policy of the Democratic Party, 1893–1901* (1919); E. C. Sloane, *The Foreign Policy of the Republican Party, 1893–1899* (1918).

"Political organizations have emerged from the twilight of private collections of men whose proceedings concern no one else, into the strong glare that falls on associations of a public character whose action affects the entire community. And yet we are singularly ignorant of the real influence which party exerts upon public affairs."

A. L. LOWELL, " Influence of Party upon Legislation," in *American Historical Association Report* (1901), I, 321.

# CHAPTER XV

## STRUGGLE OF PARTY LEADERS

Roosevelt's previous political career—His relationship to party organization—
The Republican organization personnel—Roosevelt's indication of leader-
ship—Bryan's fight for control of the Democracy—Disappearance of
Independents—Continued weakness of the Democracy—The Republican
party organization in the convention of 1904—The Democratic realign-
ment in party convention—The campaign—Increase in Socialist appeal
—Effect upon Democratic organization—The increasing complexity of
Republican membership—The Democracy of 1906—The Bryan-Taft
campaign—Republican doctrine—The effect of the long period of con-
trol—The insurgents in western states.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT was forty-two years of age when he
became President on September 14, 1901. He was a man of
experience in public life. Always a Republican by declara-
tion, he had, as well, been active in party councils, local, state
and national. Near the beginning of his political career he
had actively participated in the preliminaries of the campaign
of 1884. Even though Blaine had been nominated, and many
of those within the party with whom he had been working
thereupon refused to support the ticket, Roosevelt had not
bolted. In the subsequent years, he had more to do with the
actual administration of government than with the operation
of the machinery of party. Yet in the various offices that he
had occupied, including Civil Service Commissioner, Police
Administrator, and Assistant Secretary of Navy, he had not
only preserved an unusual independence of action, but had
upon occasion indicated a willingness to fight within the party
organization for an extension of the powers of the individual
member of the party. In his most recent public office, that
of Governor of New York, he had revealed himself quite will-

ing to coöperate with the boss of the Republican party organization, but inclined to frequent independence and an ever present program of his own which he used the party machinery to advance. In experience, training and interest he was utterly unlike any of the earlier Vice-Presidents who had succeeded to the Presidency. That he would play an active rôle as a party leader in the Presidency was certain. Again it was certain that as a party leader he would be utterly unlike his predecessor.

Experienced though he was, for a short period having served as a member of the administration, and finally having been the running mate of McKinley in 1900, yet at no time had he been fully sympathetic with the party dynasty which came into power in 1896. He had been a supporter of Reed in 1896, and he did not, even later, consider McKinley an effective leader; nor, as we have seen, was he in turn agreeable to either McKinley or Hanna. He had toured the country as the Vice-Presidential candidate, and although he appeared under the auspices of the National Committee, his course was not always pleasing to the management. It was in truth a personal canvass. He was precisely the type of man, who was not acceptable to the leaders of party organization. It was unthinkable that any party organization would have willingly nominated him for the Presidency in 1900. Now, however, the problem of the mangers of the party was one of first magnitude. Upon the occasion of taking the oath of office Roosevelt said: "It shall be my aim to continue absolutely unbroken the policy of President McKinley." But it was not Roosevelt, but Hanna, who was to continue the McKinley practice of party government. It was he who continued to speak for the party forces that had been dominant during the preceding four years.

But the Republican party was not in 1901 possessed of a definite party program, as it had been in 1897. There was

opportunity, as there was need, for a leader who could re-shape its appeal and its purpose as it was given new substance to meet the demands of the new century. As the personnel of the party management was changing but slowly, there was certain to be an outbreak within the organization, for the Republicans were to have the same struggle which had for ten years been so characteristic of the Democratic party, responding as it had to the new alignments within the electorate.

The business of the Republican organization had been primarily the task of running the government. Longer lease of power than had been usual had strengthened this tendency. It was to be expected, therefore, that in the absence of an acute economic crisis or the appearance of a question of foreign policy, the divisions within the party membership, and to a less extent among the leaders, would appear in the consideration of political methods and particularly of those that made for an enlargement of the power of the voter in the party management. For the rising tide of social democracy made it certain that no agency for the expression of the public will could long escape a revaluation in the light of the demands of the common people for a larger share in self government. Reforms in political procedure must of necessity involve consideration of party methods. However, in this instance the proposed reforms were closely associated, as they had not been in the seventies and eighties, with the power and influence of big business in politics.

In considering the course of action that should be his at this juncture, Roosevelt chose to direct his attention upon the "trusts" that had become powerful enough to disregard the government. Even at the outset the attack of the President was not upon large business, as such, but upon the excesses and evils attendant upon the existence of powers that believed themselves superior to the government itself. As envisaged by Roosevelt the issue was political rather than econo-

mic. He submitted his first message, the elaborate and famous message of 1901, to Hanna, but, as had been his practice in his relations with Platt in New York, he did not act upon the advice given him. A division between the men was definitely marked at this time. It was clear that there were to be at least two Republican parties, whatever the surface appearance might be. Roosevelt intended to contest for power with the party leader who had proved a victor over such leaders as Quay and Platt, and who was in 1901 more powerful than at any time in his career.

Roosevelt was essaying an even greater task. In the opening years of the twentieth century only a man of great courage, and greater power of growth, could expect to rival in the attention given him by the ruling classes such industrial leaders as Rockefeller, Carnegie, and Morgan. That he was prepared to move as an executive, as well as to recommend to the Congress, was publicly realized when in mid-February of 1902 his Attorney-General announced the policy of the government toward the Northern Securities merger. The Sherman Anti-Trust Act of 1890 was the basis for the action.

Bryan apparently saw at once the effect that the fight for leadership in the Republican party would have upon the immediate future of the Democratic party. After Roosevelt's first message to Congress in December of 1901, Bryan in all his discussion of the President,—and no other single topic received as much attention in *The Commoner*,[1]—stressed the possible differences between professions and performances. Divining as certainly as did Roosevelt the prime importance of the "trust question," he repeatedly pointed out the difference between "preventing evils in trust organizations and practice" and the Democratic plan "for destroying every pri-

[1] *The Commoner* (condensed) is a mine of information, not only revealing the views of Bryan, the editor, but indicating the development of the fight within the party membership.

vate monoply." Notwithstanding the statements of Bryan, in which he was upheld in his view of the President by the Democratic leaders in Congress, the popularity of Roosevelt's position on the trusts and his action in the coal strike of 1902 brought to his standard thousands of supporters who had for ten years been interested in control of corporations and who, of late, had been followers of Bryan.

As the attention of the electorate became fixed more and more upon the question of Roosevelt's ability to gain the leadership of his party, Bryan may well have felt that the great danger for the Democracy lay in the nomination of a conservative Democrat, although the platform should be one of mild protest. This became the policy of those who were termed "reorganizers." At the same time, particularly early in 1902, in answer to the taunts of the Socialist press that the Democratic party was soon to disappear as a major party, because of its failure adequately to express a radical program demanded by an increasing number, Bryan took pains to enumerate the planks of the last platform that showed "the party marching forward as rapidly as issues develop."

The election of 1902 revealed that all the independent political movements which had been active during the preceding thirty years had lost their hold. It was, as far as results were concerned, a straight two-party contest. The Democratic party elected more Congressmen than at any time in ten years. Part of the increase was due to the reapportionment on the basis of the new census, but there were actual gains. Thus for the first time since 1890 there were to be no Independents of any kind in Congress. Protest from minor parties seemed to have run its usual course. Soon after the assembling of this Congress there were renewed indications that the Democratic party was to forsake its program of protest and was to assume "the guardianship of the Constitution."

Even though the result of the elections of 1902 continued the Republican party in power, there appeared to be a greater number in Congress who felt that a new Republicanism must develop. The personnel of the party organization in several middle western states also was slowly changing; fewer and fewer men of the reconstruction era were in important office. But the important business of running the government had come to involve a tremendous patronage and the exercise of national influence. Younger men, aspiring to a part, found that conformity was the only way to advancement in the party. It was apparent, above all else, that the business interests of the nation were now vitally interested in the continuance by the Republican national organization of the traditions of 1896.

The preliminaries of the convention of 1904 vividly revealed the weaknesses of the Democracy. The bulk of the Democrats in national public office were southerners. Yet a movement to consider a nominee from the South came to nothing. If the candidate was to be a representative of western Democracy of 1896, none could compete with the twice defeated Bryan. The Middle West had no candidate. The candidate of the Democracy must come from the East and from New York. Judge Alton B. Parker of the New York Court of Appeals was finally fixed upon as the man. His New York managers came to St. Louis with a sufficient number of delegates to nominate him on the first ballot. His most conspicuous opponent was Congressman William Randolph Hearst, an advocate of extreme economic and social reform, and chiefly known through the medium of his several newspapers.

Bryan, in public address and particularly through the medium of *The Commoner*, urged the Democratic "rank and file" to express their views upon the plans of the "reorganizers." His own position was one of absolute opposition to the plans of David B. Hill of New York, and to the candidacy of

Parker. He proposed no candidate, but he prepared the reso-
lutions of the Nebraska state convention which declared:
"Democracy would oppose as inimical to the welfare of the
people all private monopolies and would exterminate them by
the enforcement of the remedies suggested in the Kansas
City (1900) platform." The resolutions called for an income
tax, the direct election of United States Senators, direct legis-
lation, and declared against government by injunction. With
this declaration as a basis for action Bryan went to the St.
Louis convention with the intention of preventing the adop-
tion of a national platform which should either be silent on
"trusts," as many harmonizers desired, or "meaningless,"
as had been the New York state platform.

Prior to the meeting of the state conventions of 1904,
Roosevelt as President had captured popular imagination
and won a widespread popular support by two acts, neither of
which was taken as a leader of his party or required action of
his party associates, yet both of which were used as part of
the party record, by both friends and opponents. The first
of these acts was his intervention in the coal strike of 1902;
the second was his seizure of Panama. In the first case, he had
the active support of Hanna. In the second, although Hanna
felt that the President had been precipitate, yet he supported
him. Indeed, Hanna had been the actual leader of the group
in the Senate who favored the Panama route as opposed to
the Nicaragua group led by Senator Morgan.

Roosevelt desired the nomination in 1904. Any open
break with Hanna made success doubtful. Even in event of
success, little would have been gained if there developed a
bolt, silent or otherwise, of the conservative elements in the
party. Despite his coöperation with such leaders as Senator
Aldrich and Speaker Cannon, there was continued distrust
of him by party associates in Congress. The business in-
terests, alarmed by the possibilities of the anti-trust cam-

paign, made the most of the desire of the party organization to secure a President more in line with recent party tradition. State conventions had, however, indorsed the President as early as 1902. The matter was brought to an issue in the spring of 1903, when Hanna refused at first to acquiesce in an indorsement of Roosevelt by the state convention of Ohio, later consenting only under the insistence of Roosevelt, to reverse his position. Continued indorsements and much support from the public did much to insure the result.

Hanna died in February of 1904. Naturally there has been a tendency to emphasize the importance of this fact in the collapse of the anti-Roosevelt campaign. There was no other outstanding figure within the party organization, but organizations rarely choose their candidates from the inner circle. In a sense the "old dynasty" fell in the passing of Hanna, yet the "fall" ought not to be given too great an emphasis. Hanna had been a power for eight years only, and the party organization had been a power long before his advent. The organization personnel was changing, but not rapidly. It was, however, evident that nomination and election would place Roosevelt in a position not before occupied by him, and occupied by but few of his predecessors; that of actual leader of the party organization.

The rapidly enlarging group of Rooseveltians in public office was a menace to control by the party organization. It was, however, noticeable that there were few of this type in Congress, few indeed among the leaders of either House or Senate. Only here and there in the local and state organizations was there a tendency to follow the President in his program. But in the interests of party success unity of expression was achieved long before the national convention assembled.

The convention met in Chicago and was in session only three days. It pointed out that the party had been in exist-

ence just fifty years; of the forty-four years since the election of Lincoln it had been in complete control of the national government for twenty-four years; and of the remaining twenty the opponents had been in complete control for only two years. "This long tenure of power," said they, "is not due to chance. It is a demonstration that the Republican party has commanded the confidence of the American people for nearly two generations to a degree never equalled in our history." It then proceeded to elaborate upon the period of rule since 1897. The record was an imposing one. The work of the party was made to include all that had been written into the political record of those years. Officials had labored, in the Congress and in the executive offices, and all of their work rebounded to the credit of the party which put them there. This was true in the case of Roosevelt, who was presented as the standard bearer of the party. Root in his address as chairman identified the work of the President with the work of the party.

But there were indications that there was another phase of Republicanism more active than heretofore. The regular delegation from the state of Wisconsin, headed by Governor Robert M. LaFollette, was unseated by the national committee and their places given to a protesting delegation which included the two United States Senators and a member of the President's cabinet. LaFollette had been engaged in a ten-year fight with the party organization in his state, and had finally secured a majority support from the voters. His call had been for a change in the methods of nomination in order to strengthen the power of the individual voter.[2] This plea had included as well an attack upon the inordinate political power of financial interests in Wisconsin, a point of view not unlike that of Roosevelt in the nation. LaFollette's Re-

[2] See R. M. LaFollette, Autobiography; a remarkable personal narrative, particularly valuable for the period prior to 1906.

publicanism was unassailable. He had won a majority of the members of his party to his support. But this indorsement was now set aside by the greater power of the national organization of the party. The issue was clear, although not as much attention was given it at the time as one might expect in view of the later history of the movement.

The only real contest in the Democratic convention took place in the Committee on Resolutions. Bryan drew that portion of the platform that dealt with the prosecution of trusts. It was supported by the western members and opposed by the eastern members and most of those from the South. A declaration for an income tax was omitted, and a resolution calling for government ownership of railroads was rejected. Repeatedly it was urged by members from the East and South that, wherever differences of opinion arose, the questions should be dropped. Even Bryan evidenced willingness upon minor matters, but with reference to the question of "trusts" he was firm. "The Democracy must maintain its well-understood attitude toward plutocracy."

The insistent fighting of Bryan, coupled with the desire of the eastern managers in control of the nomination not to lose the support of the western Democrats, resulted in a platform that is distinctly one of protest. "We denounce protection as a robbery of the many to enrich the few. We favor a revision and gradual reduction of the tariff by the friends of the masses. A private monopoly is indefensible and intolerable." The eight closing paragraphs in the platform indicted the existing Republican administration, after the manner of the colonial arraignment of George III, as arbitrary, autocratic, in open violation of or by strained construction of the law. "We would perpetuate constitutional government."

When the struggle was renewed in the convention by the reception of the Parker "gold telegram," the incongruous

elements which composed the party were revealed with as great distinctness as before the adoption of the platform in the committee. To the Parker declaration of "the gold standard as irrevocably fixed," Bryan replied in such a manner and with such response from a majority of the delegates as to make clear that poor success awaited a party that discredited even by inference the leadership of the preceding eight years.

Parker termed "constitutionalism" the paramount issue. Bryan gave his support to the ticket, repeatedly declaring, however, that the nomination of Parker virtually nullified the "trust planks" and that little advance in economic reforms could be expected in the event of his election. Nor was he content with a simple reiteration of the Democratic platform position upon this question. A few days after the St. Louis convention Bryan wrote that "now, as not when he had been a candidate, he felt free to try to ingraft new doctrines on the party creed." He invited attention to (1) government ownership and operation of railroads, (2) income tax (reaffirmed as in 1900), (3) direct legislation, (4) election of federal judges for stated periods. The first of these declarations caused astonishment among those who in 1900 had accepted it that "Bryan was positively anti-Socialist" and that "he did not even believe in government ownership of railroads." Although Bryan was soon moved to say that the Socialists were more friendly to the Republicans than to the Democrats, and that the latter party stood for "Individualism not Socialism," an explanation of his position may be found in his declaration: "The rapid growth of the Socialist party is conclusive proof that the Democratic party has been too conservative to satisfy the reform element of the country."

Roosevelt in his turn was willing to coöperate with the conservative leaders. In his acceptance speech he identified his record with that of his party. The tariff was dealt with as a matter of business. But the tariff was not the issue,

nor was the money question in any phase. For a small group of the electorate the trust question was the issue; to another group it was the rising power of the expansionist; but in the end for all it was more than anything the personality of Roosevelt. The President chose his own manager, making an effort to secure Elihu Root, and failing in this as in two other cases, taking his Secretary of Commerce, George W. Cortelyou.

The campaign was uneventful. Near the close the Democratic candidate repeated in public address a charge that had been used generally in the course of the canvass. It was to the effect that the Republican national chairman was using his information collected as Secretary of Commerce as a pressure upon large corporations for financial support of the Republican campaign. That large contributions had been made was known. The insinuation of blackmail, however, brought from the President himself an indignant denial. The well known fact that both party organizations were supported by the contributions of wealthy men and large corporations made more significant the evident desire of each candidate to clear himself of undue influence. It added zest to the charge of the radicals that there was really little to choose between the two parties.

The Socialist vote of 1904 increased fourfold over the vote of 1900. Many former Populists were now Socialists, but the Populist nominee received 117,000 votes. The Socialist Labor ticket held its vote. The distribution of the total vote in the western states makes it clear that thousands of followers of Bryan voted for Roosevelt because of his reputation as a "trustbuster." West of the Mississippi the Democratic vote was 500,000 less than in 1900. In the nation at large it decreased 1,272,000. There was a decrease of 300,000 in the South, where Parker carried thirteen states. In seven states, Delaware, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, West Virginia, Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina, Parker's vote exceeded

the vote cast for Bryan four years before. It is clear from this showing that the Democratic weakness in 1904 was not sectional. Parker carried only 1,167 counties in the Union, and of these only eighty-five were in states outside of the South. Roosevelt received a larger majority than had any previous candidate. He carried West Virginia, Missouri and Maryland. The congressional elections showed the same weakness. Outside of the South only twenty-three Democratic Congressmen were elected, and of these eleven were from New York City. The Senate alignment gave fifty-seven Republicans and thirty-two Democrats.

Roosevelt's acquisition of such widespread popular support was made possible by the failure of the Democracy to justify the expectations aroused in 1896. The party had seemed at that time to promise an emancipation from the oppressions of organized wealth, and the return of a more equitable democracy. A great minority of the voters had twice supported Bryan for these reasons. When Roosevelt professed to desire these ends many Democrats came to his support, particularly as the Democratic organization, in spite of the platform, had no longer the purpose of 1896. The outcome of this campaign made it clear that, if the Democracy was to make progress toward the realization of the planks in the platform, it would be wiser to nominate a man who could poll the vote of protest The result strengthened the leadership of Bryan. In commenting upon the outcome Bryan invited all Democrats to unite "in making the Democratic party a positive, aggressive, and progressive reform organization." "The trust question presents the most acute phase of the contest between democracy and plutocracy."

In common parlance there was in November of 1904 a Republican vote of 7,628,785. Within this body of voters there were, of course, many degrees of Republicanism, as it had become increasingly evident that there were many differ-

ent kinds of Republican leaders, judged either by belief,
activity or record. The overwhelming indorsement of Roose-
velt gave to his second administration a more personal char-
acter than had been true in the preceding three years. This
personal leadership of party as well as nation subordinated
the question of party doctrine, increased the number of men
of personal rather than party allegiance, and laid the ground
work for the serious struggle for party control which was to
break out the moment that the leadership of the President
ceased. In the congressional elections of 1906 the Democrats
made gains, but did not reach the point of 1902. The Repub-
licans remained in overwhelming control of the House, and
the Democratic membership in the Senate sank to the lowest
point, save one, since the close of Reconstruction.

Considering the period 1897-1909, one is struck by the fact
that it is possible to formulate the outstanding views, to
evaluate the significant events, and to present the important
political leaders without considering, except occasionally,
any other than Republicans.[3] The basis for this lies in the
recognized weakness of all opposition. This fact being estab-
lished and accepted, the divisions within the Republican
party leadership were inevitable, and their story constitutes
most of the interest of these years.

Various aspects of Republicanism came to be recognized in
the course of the second administration of Roosevelt. There
was first of all the activity and program of the President.
There were those who grouped about his personal leadership, but
who were by no means always in accord with him or he with
them. There were the party machines in the two Houses
of Congress, which had been gathering strength in an un-
broken sway of ten years, and who in 1906 were to have four
more years. Closely associated with these legislative organiza-

[3] This has been done by J. F. Rhodes, in *The McKinley and Roosevelt Ad-
ministrations*.

tions was the national committee, which in 1905 still retained some of the subordinate leaders that had come to power with Hanna, as well as a group of men whose position dated from the early nineties. There were also the powerful state organizations, inheriting the power of such bosses as Platt and Quay, and Alger and Sawyer, and in opposition to whom year by year more insurgents, in office or out of it, asked that Republicanism be reorganized in personnel and in program. All these elements claimed to be of the Republican tradition. They did not agree on an immediate program of any high significance, but they did have in common a body of principles that were no longer in keen dispute. They were at best a great governing organization. And back of them, and making the impending struggle among themselves possible and worth while, was the body of several million habitual Republican voters.

From this point of view it is obvious that much that was done by the President and that became identified with the "Roosevelt policies" has little to do with party history. This is true notwithstanding the claims of party platforms, particularly after the event. The line between Roosevelt as party leader, and as chief executive officer of the government, may be more clearly seen if thought is given to the program of Roosevelt as coming from him in 1896 or in 1900, or to the subsequent program which he elaborated as a private citizen in the years 1910-1911 when he attempted to bring the party organization into line with his position.

But as President he was able to obtain from his party associates an imposing amount of legislation. His executive acts and his remarkable power over public opinion of the moment gave to the Republican party of which he was the titular leader an appeal that out-bid all opposing organizations. At the same time the powerful party organization in the Senate ruled with an unbending hand all matters strictly

within its control, and in the House the power of the Speaker and his immediate associates was such as to make talk of self-government a mockery. Against each of these machines a few insurgents struggled in vain, and with little attention from the President.

The President frequently expressed his belief in party organization. But to him its chief function lay in the process of obtaining office rather than in administering the government. He used other means for formulating public opinion. A notable example was the conference on the conservation of natural resources, to which were invited private citizens as well as state officials. As in the first administration, so in the second, the mainspring of the President's action was his insistence upon the power of the government as superior to private business. This was notable in the passage of the Meat Inspection Bill, the Pure Food Bill, and finally the Hepburn Rate Bill. The panic of 1907, ascribed by so many to Republican legislation and Roosevelt policies, seems to have shaken the President's confidence in the efficacy of his method. It gave renewed opportunity for the more conservative members of the party to stress the importance of a successor who would "go slow." There was in 1907 much talk of the desire to have Roosevelt run again, but it was not indulged in by the outstanding political leaders. Except among those who had been drawn into the government service by an agreement with the President, such talk was chiefly evident among those who had something to gain in trading upon the popularity of the President with masses of the people.

On March 4, 1907, the Democratic party had been out of power ten years. A decade as a party of protest had brought, on the whole, a declining support from the electorate. In the meantime the Republican party had exercised an absolute control of national policy, in a manner unequalled in recent history for thoroughness or for popular support. Moreover,

the Socialist party had come forward rapidly as an agency for reform. It is, perhaps, not strange that in the years 1905-7 a frequent question was: "Has not the Democratic party outlived its usefulness? " Few who looked beneath the surface thought so, but the cause of "reform," as carried forward by the Democracy, seemed a thankless task.

In the course of the campaign of 1906 twenty-one Democratic state conventions indorsed Bryan as candidate for the Presidency in 1908. Renewed attempts to direct attention to several southerners came to nothing. The most serious opposition to the third nomination of Bryan appeared in a movement to nominate John A. Johnson, at the time governor of Minnesota. Particularly in the East was he widely discussed, and in a visit at Washington, D. C. and on a subsequent tour in the South he made a favorable impression. During this time his speeches were marked by a temperate treatment of economic questions. His record, however, showed him to be a radical, believing in the initiative and the referendum, and strict control of all monopoly. He was particularly antagonistic to the railway interests. As it soon developed, even with his wide popularity and western record, he could make no serious progress against the Bryan enthusiasm.

The Democratic convention of 1908 adopted a platform that mirrored "the increasing signs of an awakening throughout the country," no resolution more so than the one in which it was stated that "Shall the people rule? " was the overshadowing issue. The party reiterated its demand for the extermination of private monopoly. Bryan had written the same demand in the two previous platforms, but in this one he added:

"Among the additional remedies we specify three: First, a law preventing a duplication of directors among competing corporations; second, a license system which will, without abridging the right of each state to create corporations doing

business within its limits, make it necessary for a manufacturing or trading corporation engaged in interstate commerce to take out a federal license before it shall be permitted to control as much as 25 per cent of the product in which it deals, a license to protect the public from watered stock, and to prohibit the control of such corporation of more than 50 per cent. of the total amount of any product consumed in the United States; and third, a law compelling such licensed corporations to sell to all purchasers in all parts of the country on the same terms after making due allowance for cost of transportation."

This plank constituted the most important declaration of the party upon the issue that the candidate considered the most acute phase of the conflict between plutocracy and democracy.

Moreover, the party pledged itself to the removal of duties upon "trust-made goods." It declared against the use of injunctions in labor disputes. Of the four proposals to which Bryan had invited Democratic attention in 1904, one only, the declaration in favor of an income tax, appeared in the platform. Instead of government ownership of railways, the platform called for a physical valuation as an aid in regulation. There was no mention of direct legislation. The more recent trend of public sentiment was revealed in a demand for campaign publicity, and an indictment of the Speaker's power in the House of Representatives. In spite of that portion of the platform which demanded that "it be made impossible for a private monopoly to exist in the United States," it is not too much to say that the Democratic declaration of 1908 emphasized the need of reform rather than called for violent change. Considering the circumstances under which this platform was constructed, and that Bryan was the candidate, the position of the party appeared less advanced than it had in 1900. During this campaign, as never before in his career,

Bryan's adherents urged that he was no longer a radical, in that the country had caught up with him. In a measure this was true, for in emphasizing reform Bryan was in agreement with the more advanced Republicans, as the out-and-out radicals were insistent in pointing out. In November the four radical parties had 546,000 votes, of which 420,890 were cast for Eugene Debs, the nominee of the Socialists.

It was twelve years after a sectional revolt split the Democracy at Chicago that a Republican convention meeting in that city was compelled to consider at some length the proposals of western progressives. Their representative was presented to the convention with this form of recommendation: "We point to the most perfect system of constructive legislation written on the statute books of any state in the Union. The Wisconsin idea—the restoration of the government to the people—is today an uplifting force in every commonwealth in this republic." Thus was Senator La Follette urged upon the convention as "the man who justly should be the successor of Theodore Roosevelt." This convention was prepared to do the bidding of President Roosevelt because of the body of public sentiment back of any indorsement that he might make. The outspoken President was in his turn too good a politician to ask the nomination of the lone insurgent who had fought the battle in the Senate but who was as yet the leader of a few western folk  The nomination of Secretary Taft might be expected to carry assurance to the West that the "Roosevelt policies" would be carried forward in the event of Republican victory. And the party organization controlled in the framing of the platform as completely as it did in the nomination of Congressman James S. Sherman of New York for the Vice-Presidency. The western progressives offered amendments in the committee and filed a minority report from the Committee on Resolutions. There were proposals for the physical valuation of railway properties

as a basis for government rate-making, a revision of the tariff on the basis of the difference in cost of production at home and abroad, a permanent tariff commission; and planks favoring popular election of Senators and the publication of campaign contributions and expenditures. This report of the minority was termed "Socialistic and Democratic" by the chairman of the Committee on Resolutions. The largest vote for a minority amendment was one hundred and fourteen for the popular election of Senators, and the minority report as a whole received only twenty-eight votes on the final question of the adoption of the platform as submitted.

The ultra-western character of the Denver convention and the nomination of Bryan led to the opinion that much of the West might reënter Democratic ranks. But the changes of the last few years in the Republican party in a number of western states had not only won local support but had also engendered confidence in the national possibilities of the party. Moreover, the "Roosevelt policies" were constantly to the fore. The national Republican appeal to the West may be found in these words of Taft in his acceptance speech on the twenty-second of September: "He [Roosevelt] demonstrated to the people by what he said, by what he recommended, and by what he did, the sincerity of his efforts to command respect for the law, to secure the equality of all before the law, and to save the country from the dangers of a plutocratic government, toward which we were fast tending." The West, adhering to the principle of protection, accepted the Republican promise of revision, finding confidence in the repeated declarations of Taft, during his campaign tour in the Middle West, that "the Republican party [was] pledged to a genuine revision of the tariff." Finally, in answer to Bryan's attacks, he said: "I can say that our party is pledged to a genuine revision, and as temporary head of that party and President of the United States if it be successful in Novem-

ber, I expect to use all the influence that I have by calling immediately a special session and by recommendations to Congress to secure a genuine and honest revision." After this Secretary Taft was generally accepted in the Middle West as the political heir of President Roosevelt.

That Roosevelt had brought about the nomination of Taft in 1908 led to a widespread belief that the party organization was responsive to the Roosevelt leadership. In the general platform and in praise of the past this was so. But the nominee was as much an outsider as Roosevelt had been, far more so than Root who might well have been the nominee.[4] If Taft was to carry out the Roosevelt policies, it must be by obtaining the full support of the party machine in the halls of Congress. As for the pledge of tariff revision, this raised the question of the strength of the party organization in acting as protector of the business interests.

In the course of the canvass of 1908 it was clear that a majority of the voters desired a revision of the tariff, a check placed upon the Speaker's power in the House, and a stricter control of monopoly. All these the Democrats promised. They emphasized in particular the general cry, "restore the government to the people." At the same time the Republican tariff plank was ambiguous, and made satisfactory to a widespread sentiment in the Middle West only by the campaign utterance of Taft. The influence of Speaker Cannon was prominently present in the councils of the party during the campaign. Recollection of the repeated failures of President Roosevelt to gain from the Republican leaders in the Senate what he demanded led some to assert that additional trust legislation might not be expected through the agency of the Republican party. Moreover, the country was still suffering from the panicky conditions of 1907. The

[4] It is noticable that in his well known letter to G. O. Trevelyan, Roosevelt speaks of Taft as President, but not as party leader.

two most prominent leaders of organized labor were openly favoring the election of the Democratic candidate. In spite of all these apparently favorable conditions Bryan failed to be elected. This result indicated continued lack of confidence in the Democratic party.

Bryan's vote was 1,323,000 more than Parker's vote in 1904, but he failed to poll the vote he received in 1896. He carried fourteen states in the South and four in the West: Nevada, Colorado, Nebraska and Oklahoma, the last named state appearing for the first time in the electoral college. His majorities outside of the South were small. The distribution of the county vote was on the whole as it was in 1900; in addition to 46 new counties in Oklahoma, Bryan carried 70 counties he had not carried in 1900. In all sections the distribution of the county vote showed him weaker in 1908 than he had been in 1900.

It was natural that the want of confidence in the Democratic party should be ascribed to Bryan's leadership. The distribution of the Parker vote in 1904 would tend to disprove this deduction, and the subsequent vote cast for Wilson in 1912 makes such an explanation impossible. The declared position of the party in all three campaigns was essentially the same. The basic anti-trust declaration was identical. Wilson, of southern birth and eastern residence, with a record as a progressive governor of an eastern state, and warmly supported by Bryan, was unable to bring a majority of the voters to the Democratic standard. His vote was slightly less than that cast for Bryan in 1908; it was distributed in much the same areas and undoubtedly represented the same elements. The failure of the Democratic party to gain control of Congress or to keep control, except by reason of division in the opposition, strengthens the view that it has been neither platforms nor candidates that fully explain the place of the Democratic party in the public mind. The party continued to decline in public favor for three reasons: (1) In 1896 it polled the

vote of all radicals except the Social Laborites, and its sub-
sequent record alienated these elements.  (2) The preponder-
ance of southerners in the Democratic representation in Con-
gress resulted in a party record that was unsatisfactory to
the agricultural elements of the West which had formed the
basis for the new Democracy in 1896.  (3) With the rise to
national importance of the Progressive Republicans the De-
mocracy had to meet proposals for reform urged by a party
in power and by middlewestern leaders with a reputation for
getting things accomplished.

The overthrow of the Republican majority in the House of
Representatives in the election of 1910 ended a complete
control of the national government which that party had
held for fourteen years.  During this period of supremacy,
although not seriously threatened by a divided and con-
sequently weakened Democracy, it had been found neces-
sary to seem to formulate a policy to meet the demands of a
new industrial era.  As huge aggregations of capital assumed
a more complete control of the natural resources, necessities
of life, and means of transportation, the Roosevelt admini-
stration, responding to a public apprehension that manifested
greater intensity in the first years of the new century, em-
barked upon a policy of stricter control of industrial develop-
ment.  In this period of the widening of government activity,
in the state as well as the nation, it became evident that the
two ideals of individual freedom and equal opportunity,
richly nurtured and steadily upheld in the recently completed
pioneer movement, had become irreconcilable.[5]  Unrestricted
individual freedom in the new period tended to hasten the
elimination of equal opportunity.  It became clearer that
business had entered politics in order to conserve by indirec-
tion the principle of unrestricted liberty that it might be
applied to the corporation.  Western political leaders, still

[5] *Cf.* F. J. Turner, *The Frontier in American History*, Chapters 9, 12.

maintaining the ideal of equal opportunity, urged a more adequate control of the activities of the corporation. Representative government was put to a test by these conflicting forces. New alignments first appeared in states of the Mississippi valley, where the manifest weakness of the Democracy emboldened the Republican organization to refuse to accede to the demands of some of the younger men who were desirous of "driving the System out of politics." The disagreement more often than not took form in the opposition of the younger group to the influence and methods of railway companies. Dissatisfaction with party forms and practices found expression in bills providing for primary elections, campaign publicity, restrictions upon lobbying, and a more careful legislative procedure, all aiming to enhance the control of the electorates, even though one strong political party remained in office.

These conflicts within the dominant party brought an increased public interest in the problems and machinery of government. Voters began to care less for the complimentary references to their representatives, and to watch more carefully the roll call upon important measures. The government was brought nearer to the people, perhaps as much by this renewed interest as by the changes in the machinery of elections. Yet as the field of the struggle widened a conviction arose that the representative principle had failed. It became apparent that an absolute faith in representative government led to the lack of interest among the mass of citizens and resulted in a concentration of power in the hands of a few men. Such concentration of power was not in keeping with the aims of a democratically minded people.

In several states these insurgents within the dominant party achieved a degree of reform in political forms and methods. As an attitude of mind rather than a political creed, and having its rise within state alignments, the appeal of insurgency cut across the old party barriers. Each fight

attracted the interest and aid of a large group of independents, men who for twenty years had been voicing a growing discontent. More and more after 1900 the independent voter lost interest in third party movements and in the rather indefinite promises of a weakening Democracy, and turned attention to the control of the dominant party.

For almost a decade the insurgency manifest in western states did not trouble except infrequently the national Republican organization. In the few cases where the clash was revealed the national party power was used to crush the insurgents. Attention was diverted from the dominant figures in the Republican party organization by the energetic personality in the White House. Roosevelt's understanding of the West made it possible for him to voice its feelings more completely than had any prominent federal official up to that time, and the elimination of Bryan's influence in the Parker campaign of 1904 gave the Republican candidate an enthusiastic support in former Populist areas. The extent of his western triumph was the most startling feature of the two and one-half million majority. Yet the national character of the Roosevelt vote showed that the Republican organization was still responsive to eastern interests. During his second administration Roosevelt voiced with increasing emphasis the distrust of party organization that had been developing with great rapidity in the Middle West. His expressions lent aid to additional state conflicts. As his term approached a close his continued assaults upon predatory wealth and unrepresentative government brought estrangement from his party organization in both Senate and House.

Less than a year after the opening of the second Roosevelt administration Robert M. LaFollette had come to Washington as a Senator from Wisconsin. As Governor of Wisconsin, he had secured provisions for primary elections and a more equitable taxation of public service corporations, and insured the

enactment of measures providing for a more careful legislative procedure and for restrictions upon lobbying. He appeared in Washington at a time when party methods were coming under closer public scrutiny. Voicing the distrust of prevailing party practices that had been developing throughout the Middle West, he advocated the measures of publicity that had led the way to the restoration of popular control in Wisconsin. His disagreement with the Republican organization leaders was constant and rose to bitter denunciation in the railway debate of 1906. He asked for a roll call upon significant amendments, and this record was read widely in the Middle West. Interest was aroused in the methods and personnel of the Senate.

But not until the meeting of the Sixty-First Congress did the new alignment appear to endanger seriously the control of the Republican party. At the critical moment of a promised tariff revision the party was without its popular leader, and as the organization in both House and Senate rested in the hands of veterans who were not responsive to demands for changes in method, western insurgency, confident and experienced in many a state conflict, swept into the national arena. In the ensuing three years the West grew increasingly restless. "Restore the government to the people!" became a winning slogan for the dominant party in at least twelve states west of the Alleghanies. It had a familiar sound, and it came from territory previously defected; but now it was used most insistently by a group within the Republican party, rather than by the followers of Bryan. This did not mean that progressive Democrats ceased to advocate more democracy as a solution for present-day problems. But in determining the influence of the West in national affairs, the attitude of the Insurgent Republicans became of first importance, inasmuch as the Republican party had been dominant in the Middle West since 1899.

The western Republican, by the time that the Taft administration was well started, openly admitted his hostility to the

organization dominant in his party, but refused to admit that true Republican doctrine and practice came from leaders who seemed to be opposed to popular government. To the charge that western states had not shown political capacity, he pointed to constructive legislation that had conserved popular control, and in which legitimate business rejoiced. Meeting the claim that the West was not basic Republican territory, he pointed to its allegiance as necessary to the dominant party. To the charge that he would destroy parties, he renewed his allegiance to the Republican faith and announced his intention to make the old party respond to new demands. He stated that if his demand for publicity, primaries and popular control had made the West the enemy's country it was high time that men of the insurgent faith captured control of the Republican organization and placed that party in as enviable a position as it occupied under the leadership of the West a half-century before.

### BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

General political background in J. F. Rhodes, cited in previous chapter; also H. J. Howland, *Theodore Roosevelt and His Times* (1921); F. A. Ogg, *National Progress* (1917).

For portions of shorter accounts see in particular, Paxson and Lingley cited in previous note.

Lives of Roosevelt of greatest political value are W. D. Lewis (1919); W. R. Thayer (1920); also, J. B. Bishop, *Theodore Roosevelt and His Time* (1920).

For the beginnings of Progressive Republicanism, see R. M. La Follette, *Autobiography* (1913); also F. E. Haynes, *Third Party Movements*, cited above.

The developments in the Democratic party may be followed in W. J. Bryan, *The Commoner*, condensed (1901–1904).

Shorter studies include E. E. Robinson, "Decline of the Democratic Party, in *American Journal of Sociology*, XX, 313; R. F. Hoxie, "The Rising Tide of Socialism," in *Journal of Political Economy*, XIX, 609.

"A complete organization from the national committee to the township and school district does not of itself constitute an organic party. And herein lies the difference between the two great parties in the United States and the minor so-called parties. It is not a matter of great difficulty for the advocates of some political or economic reform to effect an organization which duplicates, in outward form, the organization of the two great parties. A few hundred or a few thousand men will be sufficient to put in operation all the committees from the national committee down. Conventions can be held, platforms adopted, and candidates nominated. But does this organization and this activity constitute a party? In no real sense can the term party be applied. The mechanism is complete but the motive power is lacking. The form is present but the inner, vital life which is the essence of the organic party is not."

J. W. GANNAWAY, "The Real Party Forces," in the *Iowa Journal of History and Politics*, III, 518–519.

# CHAPTER XVI

## DIVISIONS IN THE REPUBLICAN PARTY

Disappearance of the Roosevelt following—The rôle of the Insurgents—The division in the House membership—The split on the Tariff of 1909—Continued insurgency and spread of the program—Strength in 1910—National Progressive Republican League—Continued disagreement—The western proposals in 1911—The program of the Progressive Republicans—The emergence of a Roosevelt candidacy—The Republican convention of 1912—The organization of a Progressive party—The Democratic convention and its program—The vote in 1912—Regularity and independence.

IT was the personal and executive character of the Roosevelt leadership that left an inconsequential Roosevelt following in Congress when he had left the Presidency. The fight against the rule of the party organization was continued by a small group of members from the Middle West, whose insurgency had been quite independent of their frequent support of Roosevelt, and who for nearly a decade had been gathering strength to force upon the party organization a new economic program and a new political platform. They rested their cause upon a fundamental of party organization; capture the organization—local, state, national—and make it responsive to a constituency. The old régime must go, but not the party name nor its prestige.

Their insurgency immediately became of national importance when the extra session of the Sixty-First Congress opened on March 15, 1909. This session, called to give consideration to a revision of the tariff, witnessed in the House of Representatives a struggle over the organization of that body in the election of a speaker and the adoption of rules. This situation was brought about by the opposition of a group of

307

Republican members, both to the reëlection of Cannon and to the readoption of the rules of the former Congress. These insurgents claimed to have the sympathetic support of President Taft, but when the test came it was found that the administration had thought it wise not to antagonize the organization leaders of the Republican majority. In spite of this development, the matter had gone so far that in the poll of votes in the election of Speaker twelve of the Republican members refused to vote for the Republican caucus nominee. With one exception they were from the Middle West. This was not sufficient to defeat Cannon, but later the insurgency of thirty-nine members defeated the motion to adopt the former rules. These insurgents, all except three of them from the Middle West, were in turn unable to secure the adoption of their proposed rules, even though they had the support of the majority of the Democratic members. This result was due to the support accorded the Cannon régime by a small group of Democrats. Twenty-two Democrats together with the bulk of the Republicans were able then to adopt a compromise measure, despite the continued opposition of the insurgent Republicans.[1]

Little opportunity was given in the House for a manifestation of insurgency upon the tariff revision program of the organization, but twenty Republicans voted against the proposed bill. The debate was soon transferred to the Senate. The non-committal tariff message of the President had excited apprehension among those western Republicans who had

---

[1] When the appointments of Speaker Cannon were announced, it was found that of the 61 committees the chairmanships of 44 important committees had been given to representatives from 8 states, of which Pennsylvania had 10, Illinois 7, and New York and Massachusetts 6 each. Representatives from 25 states held no chairmanships, and, of these, 16 were Republican states sending 52 representatives, 30 of whom were men of at least one term's experience. Four states holding 29 chairmanships sent 118 representatives; 25 states holding no chairmanships sent 129 representatives.

campaigned for a downward revision. Apprehension grew when Chairman Aldrich of the Committee on Finance did not, in an explanation of an hour and a half, mention the word "revision," while devoting himself to this question: "Will the bill as reported from the Committee on Finance produce sufficient revenue when taken in connection with the internal revenue taxes and other existing sources of revenue to meet the expenses of the government without the imposition of additional taxes?" This introduction called for expressions of surprise from western Republicans. Then it was that Senator Daniel, ranking Democratic member of the Committee on Finance, made this statement: "The Democratic members of the Finance Committee have as yet had no opportunity to read this bill or to know anything about its contents." [2]

The provisions of the reported bill were at once assailed by a group of Republican Senators from the Middle West. Chairman Aldrich had stated that "the Senate would have ample opportunity without any limitation whatever to read the bill, discuss it, and amend it." In doing so the western men complained of inadequate information, questioned the statistics submitted by the chairman, reminded the committee of the platform pledges and of Taft's utterances in the campaign, and most emphatically demanded more knowledge of the methods employed by the committee in arriving at the duties provided for in the bill. In the face of these protests Chairman Aldrich repeatedly contented himself with the statement, "The gentleman is misinformed," and several times refused to give the committee's method of procedure. In answer to the

[2] The bill as presented to the Senate came from a committe of nine Republicans: Aldrich of Rhode Island, Burrows of Michigan, Penrose of Pennsylvania, Hale of Maine, Cullom of Illinois, Lodge of Massachusetts, McCumber of North Dakota, Smoot of Utah, Flint of California. Of these, Aldrich, Hale and Lodge, all of New England, and Smoot of Utah appeared most often in defense of the bill.

request of Senator Dolliver that "the general underlying principle of the committee's provisions in Schedule K" be explained, Senator Aldrich said: "I am so anxious to get a vote upon this bill, and every feature of it, that I am willing to forego any desire to make a speech and go on and vote now." Finally he was provoked to retort: "Mr. President, where did we ever make a statement that we would revise the tariff downward?" And Senator Hepburn added: "There is nothing in the platform of the Republican party that pledges us to reform either the Republican party or its principles."

Such reform was demanded by the ten Republicans that voted against the bill when it went into conference: Beveridge of Indiana, Bristow of Kansas, Brown of Nebraska, Burkett of Nebraska, Clapp of Minnesota, Cummins of Iowa, Crawford of South Dakota, Dolliver of Iowa, Nelson of Minnesota, LaFollette of Wisconsin.

When the bill was again reported to the Senate after passing the conference committee, it was subject to the renewed attack of Senators Cummins, Dolliver, and LaFollette. Finally in closing the debate on behalf of the committee Senator Aldrich gave official recognition of the sectionalism of the revolt. "If Senators shall see fit to vote against this bill on account of their individual opinions, that is a matter for them to determine; but I suggest to those Senators that they cannot attempt to speak for the party without a protest from men who represent states here that have elected and can and will elect Republican Presidents whatever may be the attitude of individuals."

Senator LaFollette, one of the seven Senators who voted against the bill on its final passage, later said: "I say in response to the criticism of the Senator from Rhode Island that the Chicago convention was not controlled and the Chicago platform was not made by his kind of Republicanism, and I

say to him here tonight that if he had been running for the Presidency of the United States upon a tariff platform such as this bill seeks to embody into law he could not have carried four states in the Union."

In considering the basis for the statement of the leader of the Senate organization it may be suggested that the vote of 1908 gave little reason for such confidence. The states with one or two insurgent Republican Senators cast 74 electoral votes in 1908; 66 of them were cast for Taft. Had they been taken from the Republican column, had Missouri failed to give 629 majority for Taft, and had two additional votes in Maryland, where the ticket was split, been Democratic, Bryan would have had a majority of thirteen.

Throughout the debates in the summer of 1909 the attack of the Insurgents was aimed not so much at the provisions of the bill as at the methods employed by the committee in making the bill. As a partial explanation of the immediate cause for this cleavage in the Republican party these considerations may be offered. Of the nine states represented by Republicans on the Finance Committee, Rhode Island, Maine, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania in national contests had given steady Republican majorities for twenty-five years and more; Michigan, Illinois, North Dakota, and California, had not changed since 1892; Utah had been Republican since 1896. Party organization to which these Senators were attached had held unbroken control. The lowest majority given by any one of these states in 1908 was 18,444. Political upheaval seemed remote. Of the seven states one or both of whose Senators voted against the bill as it went into conference, Iowa had never left the Republican column, although the majority for governor in 1906 was the lowest in history; Kansas and South Dakota were Democratic in 1896; Indiana and Wisconsin were Democratic in 1892; Minnesota and Indiana elected Democratic governors in 1908; and Nebraska

gave its 1908 vote for Bryan. In Kansas, Iowa and Wisconsin the progressive wing of the Republican party had caused much strife and consequently more alertness.

In spite of the developments of the spring and early summer of 1909, a great portion of the West maintained confidence in the successor of Roosevelt. But the President's approval of the Payne-Aldrich bill and his defense of the law definitely made the Middle West "the enemy's country," the particular enemy being the group of Insurgent Republicans in both Senate and House against whom the party organization was prepared to wage a war of extermination. As the Ballinger-Pinchot controversy rose to first importance, these middle western leaders asserted their conviction that a battle had been lost in the elevation of Secretary Taft to the Presidency.

When Congress convened in regular session, the continued insurgency of a group of western Republicans was at once apparent.[3] The House voted to have an investigation of the "Ballinger affair." To take from Speaker Cannon the power to appoint the members of the committee a motion was made on January 7, 1910, to have the House elect the members to serve in that capacity. Twenty-six Republicans voted for the motion. When on March 19, 1910, the "rules struggle" was renewed in the House the resolution of Insurgent Republican Norris, of Nebraska, polled the largest Insurgent vote—forty-one. Throughout the remainder of this session the fight upon the party organization was continued. An unsuccessful attempt was made to amend the railway bill and to force a debate on the postal bill. The failure of the Republicans in 1910 to maintain their control of Congress recalled the period prior to 1896 when absence of effective party pro-

[3] Valuable contemporary comment by one of the Republican Insurgents is to be found in the *Letters of A. P. Gardner* (Constance Gardner [ed.]); in particular, pages, 56, 57, 69.

gram had found a dissatisfied electorate repeatedly swept by gusts of popular passion. [4]

In the Senate a group of western Republicans opposed the party organization upon all important measures, not often on motions for final passage but invariably upon the preliminary votes. Upon twenty-five important roll calls of this session the following Republican senators voted against the Republican organization: Beveridge of Indiana, Borah of Idaho, Bourne of Oregon, Bristow of Kansas, Brown of Nebraska, Clapp of Minnesota, Crawford of South Dakota, Cummins of Iowa, Dixon of Montana, Dolliver of Iowa, Gamble of South Dakota, LaFollette of Wisconsin.

The November elections of 1910 revealed the strength of Insurgency in the West. Men in sympathy with the revolt against the methods of the Republican organization named candidates or wrote platforms in every Republican state west of the Mississippi River except Colorado, Utah, Wyoming and Montana, as well as in Wisconsin, Michigan and Indiana. In Wisconsin Senator LaFollette stood for reëlection and encountered the concentrated opposition of the national Republican organization. The Insurgent Senators entered the campaign, made Wisconsin the battle field, and won the crucial engagement in the overwhelming popular indorsement of the pioneer of Insurgency. With two exceptions the western voters returned those Insurgent representatives who stood for reëlection; and added to their number new members who in campaign pledged themselves to "a scientific revision of the tariff," to "more direct control of legislative procedure," and to "more careful supervision of corporate power." When contrasted with the Democratic landslide in the East and the general weakness of the support given to prominent organization leaders everywhere, it was clear, not only that Insurgency

[4] "Comment on Congress" in *Colliers Weekly* is a mirror of important political developments thoughout the Taft administration.

was a winning issue but also that the West showed faith in the attempt to accomplish reform within the Republican party, and had directed its representatives to continue their struggle for control of the party.

To meet the new emergency the National Progressive Republican League was organized in Washington, D. C., on January 21, 1911. Its founders came from various sections of the country, but those holding political office came from the following states: California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana. The statement of principles did not deal with any economic question. The founders advocated: direct election of United States Senators; direct primaries for all elective offices; direct election of delegates to national conventions; submission of amendments for the initiative, the referendum, and the recall in the states; corrupt practice acts. This was the program of the Insurgent leaders to achieve the reformation of the Republican party. The struggles of a decade in the states and the initial conflict in the Congress had convinced these men of the hopelessness of making representative government responsive to the will of the electorate without changes in the machinery of parties and government.

When the Sixty-Second Congress met in extra session in April of 1911 seventeen Republicans refused to vote for the caucus nominee for Speaker. As the House was in the control of the Democratic party there was less opportunity than in the previous session for a manifestation of Republican Insurgency. The resolution for the popular election of United States Senators, rejected by the Republican convention of 1908, passed the House (April 13, 1911) with only fifteen Republican votes against it. Of eighty-five Congressmen from west of the Alleghanies, sixty voted against the President's reciprocity agreement with Canada, and later, in the regular

session, a smaller group broke from the party organization and voted with the Democratic majority in its tariff proposals.

The Republicans still constituted a majority in the Senate. When in April the committee assignments were announced by the Republican organization, a formal protest against the method of selection was read by Senator LaFollette on "behalf of thirteen Republican Senators." These Republicans held the balance of power and prevented the election of a president of the Senate until December 16, 1912, when a resolution introduced by Senator Smoot, providing that Senators Gallinger and Bacon, Republican and Democrat respectively, should serve alternately was finally adopted. Ten western Republicans voted against this compromise resolution.

As in the discussion of the tariff bill of 1909, most of the debate upon the Canadian reciprocity agreement took place in the Senate. The Insurgent Republicans maintained that this treaty-tariff was in keeping with the former revisions when the dominant party organization had lowered certain tariff duties without careful investigation, and with no other purpose than that of saving the whole system from public wrath. They reiterated their demand of 1909 for a generally accepted principle as a basis for all tariff-making and general access to reliable and adequate statistics. A number of organization Republicans voted against the adoption of this treaty, but the bulk of the Republican opposition came from the West and was voiced by the Insurgents as in 1909.

Throughout the spring and summer of 1911 the attitude of Congressional Insurgents became more and more hostile to the re-nomination of President Taft. In April an informal conference of Insurgents held in Washington on their arrival for the extra session urged Senator LaFollette that he become a candidate. Members of Congress in attendance or imme-

diately in sympathy with the movement came from the following states: California, Oregon, Washington, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin. The progress of the reciprocity debate emphasized the weakness of the Taft candidacy in the West, and the coalition of the Democrats and the Insurgents in the Senate in passing the tariff revision bills added momentum to the movement for a western candidate to contest the nomination with President Taft. The active campaign in the interests of Senator LaFollette opened in July, and in October three hundred delegates composed a Progressive Republican conference at Chicago which indorsed his candidacy. He was termed the "logical Republican candidate." If the voters within the party organization were prepared to take up the program associated with his name, this was true. The list of delegates was not published, but western men composed more than three fourths of the membership of the committees that were announced.

The reciprocity debate had finally made it clear that a reduction of the tariff was not the leading cause for western Insurgency. The opposition of the Congressional Insurgents as early as 1906 had invariably been against the methods of the party organization. The question of methods cut party barriers. Twenty-two Republicans voted with eighteen Democrats against the motion of Senator LaFollette that "the Senator from Illinois (Lorimer) was not duly and legally elected." On the resolution for the popular election of Senators nine Democrats united with twenty-three Republicans to retain the old method. The program of the Progressive Republicans now emphasized this disagreement as to party methods and governmental machinery. Here was revealed the essential nature of the western revolt. For a decade and more the movement for direct government, or at least for safeguards to prevent its indirection, had been growing steadily in the West. A prominent southern Senator was "unalterably opposed to

the Initiative and Referendum " measures warmly advocated
by ten of his western colleagues in that party. An eastern Re-
publican in the Senate "would scorn to consider Primary Elec-
tions or Direct Legislation," measures which were a part of
the creed of twelve of his party colleagues. These proposals
had arisen out of vain attempts to make the government re-
sponsive to the popular will, particularly with reference to the
control of public utilities.

State parties have habitually followed the national align-
ment, but since 1900 the struggles within the states had
been of first importance. The platform of the Progres-
sive Republicans embodied for national discussion the is-
sues brought forward in these state conflicts in the West
since 1900. In September of 1911 direct legislation obtained
in the following states: South Dakota, Oregon, Oklahoma,
Montana, Colorado, Nevada, Arkansas, Arizona, New Mexico.
Legislatures had referred it to the voters in California, Wash-
ington, Wyoming, North Dakota, Idaho, Nebraska, Florida
and Wisconsin. Popular election of Senators was already the
practice in Oregon, Nebraska, Nevada, Minnesota, Ohio, New
Jersey, Kansas, California and Wisconsin. Primaries to
elect delegates to the national conventions were at that time
provided for in North Dakota, Nebraska, Wisconsin, Oregon,
California and New Jersey.

Just as President Taft reached the Pacific coast at the end
of the trans-continental tour that had opened in Massachu-
setts with his denunciation of the Congressional Insurgents,
California adopted by popular vote the constitutional amend-
ments providing for direct legislation and the recall. Not all
western Republicans were agreed upon these constitutional
changes even within the states, but all united in demanding
changes in machinery and methods in nominations and elec-
tions. In particular, at this time, was a widespread direct
primary desired to select delegates to the national conven-

tion—urged throughout the West in order to permit "the rank and file of the party to express its choice."

Although a great portion of the Republican West seemed eager to repudiate the Taft administration—perhaps as bitterly hostile in that opposition as the Democratic West had been in the preliminaries of the campaign of 1896—a comparison of the western demands in the two campaigns makes clearer the real nature of Insurgent Republicanism. Sixteen years before, the West had reiterated the Populist demands for "honesty and economy in government," "a fair field for all," had opposed "commercialism and banks," and denounced "Wall Street," the "money power," and the "corruption and cowardice of party organization." Similar protests still came from the agricultural Middle West. After almost two decades of steadily increasing prosperity the westerner was still asking: "Are the trusts and combinations stronger than the government?" But in answer Senator LaFollette asked that "the Republican platform be in the last degree a constructive platform" and offered the following as his tentative suggestion: direct nominations and elections; income and inheritance taxes; parcels post; government ownership and operation of the express business; physical valuation of the railways and "trusts" as a basis for control. As a representative of the western protest within the dominant party, this leader seemed convinced that the correct solution was not to be found in the adoption of any panacea, but in a closer grip upon the organs of government and in a careful investigation and greater consideration by the electorate.

Sufficient evidence has been cited to make clear the sectionalism of the Insurgent group within the Republican party in Congress prior to the primary campaign for the Presidential nomination in the spring of 1912.[5] The advent of the Roose-

[5] Cf. E. E. Robinson, "Recent Manifestations of Sectionalism," in *American Journal of Sociology*, XIX, 446.

velt candidacy destroyed the unity of the Insurgent movement in Congress as it did in the nation. Temporarily large elements in the West ceased to express sectional convictions, in an effort to gain ascendency in the party organization by a union with discordant elements from other sections of the country. In spite of this defection, a considerable protest was registered in the Republican convention on behalf of the sectional demands of the West and its candidate. In Congress the fight upon the party organization was continued.

In the midst of the Presidential campaign the Senate commenced the consideration of the following resolution that had been reported out of the Judiciary Committee by Senator Cummins: "The term of office of President shall be six years and no person who has held the office by election or discharged its powers or duties or acted as President under the Constitution and laws made in pursuance thereof shall be eligible again to hold the office by election." The original resolution had been introduced by Senator Works of California. The greater portion of the debate took place subsequent to the November election. Except for the support of the two Senators named, the adoption of the resolution was opposed by the Insurgent group in the Senate. But in the preliminary votes upon the nine amendments that were offered to the resolution the ten Insurgent Senators were marked out as a group from their Republican colleagues.

On February 24, 1912, Roosevelt announced that if the Republican nomination were offered him by the Republican convention he would accept. In view of the size of the movement on his behalf which had been under way for some time, this announcement meant that an immediate and active campaign for the nomination would ensue. He at once dominated the canvass. He was attempting to obtain what he had appeared to have in 1908, but which he had never won in open fight, either in 1901 or in 1904; that is, control of the party

machinery. As it now appeared, he had for some time been preparing the program for such a movement. Upon his return to the United States in 1910, he had elaborated a program of political reform which he wished his party to consider and adopt. It had included, in addition to the better known policies of his Presidency, the call for a limited direct primary and for a recall of elected officials. Just before the announcement of his candidacy he had advocated the initiative and referendum, and added a recall of judicial decisions. All of these, with the exception of the last, were aimed at the power of the unofficial party leader, with whom Roosevelt had been in conflict throughout his career. He was now prepared to lead in an attempt to make the party organization responsive to the demands of the voters of the party. Although he carried into the struggle all of the prestige of a former President, yet it was as a private citizen that he now attacked the party leaders. Presidential primaries in twelve states aided Roosevelt in his fight, and revealed that the bulk of the voters participating were favorable to his candidacy. In some other states his followers were able to capture the state conventions, notably in Ohio. It was apparent, however, that in many cases those who were instrumental in accomplishing Roosevelt victories were not men who had in the past evidenced any interest in measures of political reform, and it was evident that the party organization in several states openly preferred success with Roosevelt to defeat with Taft. In several states, notably in Indiana and Michigan, there were uncertainties. These contests, together with protesting delegations from the southern states, were brought before the national committee prior to the meeting of the convention. As a result of the action of this committee it was known before the convention assembled that there were enough accredited delegates to nominate Taft.

The convention was organized by the national committee

in due accord with the practice in preceding conventions, but in defiance of the rules of fair play. Taft delegates whose seats were in dispute were permitted to vote upon the recommendation of the committee in their own cases. After the roll of the convention was thus completed, the majority of the delegates favorable to Roosevelt refrained from further participation. Elihu Root presided throughout the convention. A substitute platform offered by the delegates from Wisconsin was tabled. In the adoption of the platform there were few dissenting votes, but more than three hundred accredited delegates refrained from voting. Taft and Sherman were renominated.

The refusal of a third of the delegates to participate foreshadowed the defeat of the ticket, whatever form the revolt might now take. The schism had come, not as in 1896, because of a fundamental disagreement as to platform. There was every evidence that a compromise on platform was possible in 1912. The split came because of the violence and bitterness of the struggle for the control of the party machinery. Each faction considered such control paramount in importance to all else.

In authorizing the use of his name in the organization of a formal revolt, Roosevelt reiterated his view that the Republican convention did not represent the voters of the party. He believed, as his experience showed so often during his Presidency, that the voters would back him in preference to the party organization leaders. In view of their action in the convention, it was logical that those delegates who believed with him should lend themselves to a movement among the voters to organize a party that would meet in convention, declare its platform, and nominate candidates. This indeed would be a people's party, at least at its inception.

A mass meeting of citizens from forty states met in Chicago in August and organized what they termed the Progressive Party. Its platform was a reflection of the two dominant

elements in the membership; that calling for a change in political machinery, and that calling for an aggressive program of social legislation. Roosevelt was nominated and Governor Hiram Johnson of California named for the Vice-Presidency.

Those who met in the Democratic convention late in June were assured that their nominee would beyond reasonable doubt be the next President of the United States. From the outset, the lines of division within the party were sharply marked, as between those who were still of radical persuasion and easily led by Bryan, and those who were of the faction that had had full sway in 1904. Bryan's insistent fighting, which was begun even before the meeting of the convention, raised the question of general progressivism into the foreground. This increased the probability of the nomination of a candidate of positive character, rather than that of the type called for in the happy situation created for the Democrats by division among the Republicans. Thus, although Champ Clark of Missouri, who had served as Speaker of the House, had a majority of the delegates, he was unable to secure the necessary two thirds. On the seventh day and the forty-sixth ballot, Governor Wilson of New Jersey was nominated. He had not at any time been a member of the party organization. His recent service as governor had revealed him a man with a program, which he had forced the members of a reluctant party organization to enact into law. His had been a personal leadership. His expected campaign against the undue influence of special interests in the government of the country would fit in well upon the Democratic declarations of 1896.

Each of the three parties, as well as the Socialist party, presented their programs on a national scale. The Republican campaign was mild and ineffective. The debate between Roosevelt and Wilson, between the New Nationalism and the New Freedom, did much to reveal the length to which the ex-President had gone since his term of office, and the point

of view and the type of thinking that would mark the new President in office. But it did little to mark the campaign itself as decisive. It was taken for granted that the bulk of men who had voted for Bryan would vote for Wilson, and the main point of uncertainty was the division of the normal Republican between Roosevelt and Taft.

The assertion had long been made that party managers could not, as at a former time, depend upon a steady partizan vote, because of the increase in the number of independent voters. Various causes had been ascribed, important among which were the greater diffusion of common knowledge of public affairs and the increasing desire of the electorate to make the government more responsive to the public will. Inasmuch as the campaign of 1912 not only introduced a powerful third party, but also witnessed the active presentation of different conceptions of the nature of the government, particularly the function of political parties and their relation to different methods of expressing the popular will, it was thought a detailed examination of the election returns would go far toward testing the truth of the assertion.

In a warmly contested election the vote of 1912 was nevertheless some 200,000 less than the vote of 1908. When consideration is taken of increase in population, the total decrease in the vote of 1912 may be safely placed at 500,000. Both the Republican and Democratic parties shared in the decrease, the latter most seriously, for Wilson's vote was 116,000 less than Bryan's vote in 1908. Investigation shows that Wilson had a majority vote in essentially the same areas as carried by Bryan. In the forty-three states, where a fair comparison can be made, Wilson had a majority in one county less than the number carried by Bryan. He carried, by majority vote, fourteen of the sixteen states carried by Bryan. If the Democratic platform and candidate of 1912 attracted a greater number of voters, it did not lead to the polls.

This conclusion is confirmed by the fact that the combined vote of Taft and Roosevelt was within 73,000 of Taft's vote of 1908, and that together they held from Wilson the same areas that were Republican in 1908. It is clear that the country was not convinced that a vital issue was involved; that no considerable number of men voted for Wilson who had not voted for Bryan; that the body of voters that supported Taft [6] in 1908 chose either Taft or Roosevelt in preference to Wilson.

An examination of the congressional vote of the same year reveals the same condition. When the Democratic Congressmen went before the voters in 1912 they had to their credit a session of Democratic rule in the House of Representatives. Upon that record they asked indorsement. On the face of the returns they secured it, for their majority leaped to 147. But they had waged a battle against a divided enemy, and seventy-nine of the 291 Democratic members had only a plurality in their districts. In each, the vote of the successful Democrat was exceeded by the combined vote of the Republican and Progressive candidates. The Democrats elected by majority vote fewer members in 1912 than they had in 1910. The aggregate Democratic vote was less than it had been in 1908. The Democratic control of the House was not backed by a mandate from a majority of the electorate.

Minority rule was perhaps most sharply revealed in the nature of the Democratic control of the Senate. As a result of elections in 1912, New Hampshire, Illinois and Montana sent Democratic Senators, whose vote was exceeded in each instance by the combined vote of Progressive and Republican opponents. The presence of these three Democrats enabled the Democracy to control the Senate with a majority of six. Had these states, on the contrary, been represented by either Progressives or Republicans, the Senate would have been

[6] Analysis of the vote in "Distribution of the Presidential Vote of 1912," *American Journal of Sociology*, XX, 18.

evenly divided.   In such an event the passage of the Demo-
cratic legislation would have been attended with great diffi-
culty.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

General political background: F. A. Ogg, *National Progress*
(1918).   Portions of F. L. Paxson, *Recent History of the United,
States* (1921).

The Progressive movement may be seen from various angles in
B. P. Dewitt, *The Progressive Movement* (1915); Theodore Roosevelt,
*Progressive Principles* (1913); Woodrow Wilson, *The New Freedom*
(1913); R. M. LaFollette, *Autobiography* (1913); Lynn Haines, *The
Senate, 1907–1912* (1912); W. J. Bryan, *Tale of Two Conventions*
(1912); Constance Gardner (ed.), *Letters of A. P. Gardner* (1918).

Special studies include E. E. Robinson, "Recent Manifestations
of Sectionalism," in *The American Journal of Sociology*, XIX, 446;
E. E. Robinson, "Distribution of the Presidential Vote of 1912,"
in *American Journal of Sociology*, XX, 18.   See also, Irving Fisher,
"Analysis of Presidential Vote of 1912," in *New York Times*,
January 7, 1913.

". . . I maintain that a fair-minded examination of the present aspect of our two great parties leads to the conclusion that they still represent, with reasonable consistency, the two great ideals of government, the two great sets of interests, and the two great types of character, which in modern self-governing communities have usually lain at the base of party systems. One, I believe, has stood and still stands in the main for an effective government, the other, for a free government. One seeks an equalization of welfare and opportunity; the other bulwarks the historical rights of property. One is responsive to the changeful voice of the popular will; the other follows the intelligent guidance of successful men of affairs. One is the party of ideas and ideals, the party of liberty; the other is the party of practical achievement, the party of authority and order. . . ."

<div align="right">

W. G. Brown, "A Defense of American Parties,"
in the *Atlantic Monthly*, LXXXVI, 581–2.

</div>

# CHAPTER XVII

## RULE OF A MINORITY PARTY

The decline of the Democratic party, 1896-1912—The elements within the party membership—The emergence of an aggressive leadership—Position of Bryan—Wilson's program and procedure—Success of Presidential leadership—Divisions upon foreign policy—Growth of partizan appeal—The elections of 1914—Divisions upon the Great War—Outbreak of revolt outside of party—The disappearance of Progressives—The Republican appeal in 1916—The Democratic appeal—The vote—The party question in 1917—The fight of party organizations 1917-1918—The President's peace program—The Republican return to power in 1918—Organization of the Republican campaign of 1920—The Democratic loss of leadership—Resumption of local control—End of a period.

WHEN after the overwhelming defeat of Parker in 1904, an early death was predicted for the Democratic party, even the staunchest Democrat did not foresee that ten years later the party would go to the people with a record of two years' achievement and receive from them a favorable verdict. Had one imaged a Democratic President and a Democratic Congress placing upon the statute books in 1913 a Democratic tariff law, and proceeding later to the passage of currency and trust measures long called for in Democratic platforms, it would have been with amazement that one returned to the reality of a more than two millions' majority for Roosevelt and Fairbanks. The Democratic party seemed in 1904 hopelessly discredited, and to have lost vitality even as a compelling opposition.

Its condition seemed little better four years later. Although the popular leader of 1896 and 1900 was again the nominee, and the party seemed more united as the opposition was less aggressive, the Democratic vote, greater than in 1904, was

less than in 1896. Twelve years of leadership found Bryan more distant than ever from bringing the Democratic party into power. Meanwhile the Republican party for the first time since the Civil War had won a fourth consecutive victory. The incoming President was an official of long training in national service and was relied upon to carry forward the policies of the Republican leaders. Congress was overwhelmingly Republican, as it had been for the preceding fourteen years.

But two years later, as a result of the Congressional elections of 1910, the House had come into the control of the Democrats, the party electing a majority of the members in a straight two party contest with the Republicans. Hope had been thus revived among all those who had long anticipated the time when the Democratic party would be in a position to control in the affairs of the national government. Various elements shared in this hope. There were those who still acknowledged William Jennings Bryan as leader, and who expected the nomination in 1912 of a candidate who would voice the aspirations of this leader of pioneer Democracy. There were those who had never been sympathetic to the Bryan leadership, refusing to call it Democratic, and who except for a brief essay at party control in the spring and summer of 1904, had not seen in twenty-five years as excellent an opportunity for bringing a "true" Democrat to the Presidency. And of course there were the party supporters in city precinct and rural district whose habitual Democracy had never wavered, and who saw in the control of the national government a widening of the opportunities for caretakers of the party machine. Finally there were the leaders of the party membership in the Senate and the House, some of whom had been since 1895 the helpless critics of a dominant and audacious majority, and all of whom looked forward to full legislative power with the peculiar zest born of a considerable period of obligatory inaction.

But none of these elements had won the day in the party convention at Baltimore in 1912, for the nomination of Governor Wilson of New Jersey had marked the certainty of an abrupt break in the continuity of party leadership. Not only was the nominee a newcomer to party councils, but also the character of his immediate support seemed to promise changes in the party organization. Here was a result none of the elements quite anticipated. No outstanding leader of long experience, save Bryan perhaps, could feel with certainty that he had had any important part in the new turn in party activity. In the campaign that followed, the group of comparatively inexperienced Democrats, who had in the primaries and in the convention furnished much of the vigor and enthusiasm which characterized the Wilson candidacy, naturally had a large share. The certainty of success, insured by the impending division of the Republican vote, gave added interest to the activities of the nominee and the men who came to constitute the national party organization in the autumn of 1912. Those who had observed with understanding the assured accuracy with which Wilson had led the Democratic party organization in New Jersey realized that in the event of his election to the Presidency he would assume with studied determination the rôle of actual leader of the Democratic party of the United States.

How impressive was this change in Democratic councils may be realized best by remarking that had Wilson been defeated in 1912, he would certainly have been accorded no place in the party organization; he would have been out of it, as he had heretofore never been a part of it. His position had no greater contrast than in that of the man whom he called to serve as Secretary of State. After seizing the party leadership in the convention of 1896, Bryan had never willingly relinquished it. Defeat at the polls in 1896 did not take it from him. In spite of a second defeat in 1900, he fought to

retain it and nearly did so in the party convention of 1904. He resumed complete control in 1908, and although ignored in party councils for some time after a third defeat, at the polls he was able in the convention of 1912 to wield a power- ful, and perhaps the determining, influence. It was not until 1920 that the party organization finally and completely ignored him. As for Wilson, he did not secure as great a popular vote in 1912 as Bryan had in 1908. But on account of the division of the Republican vote between Roosevelt and Taft, he secured a great majority in the electoral college. Better prepared by special study of government and of party, than any predecessor in the Presidency, skillful in the ease with which he anticipated others in political thought, and masterly in his appreciation of the possibilities and the limits of party government, he came to take up his task in Washington with that curious mixture of humility and audacity that has fre- quently marked a leader of men who has long waited his great opportunity.

It was a minority President, in a degree greater than any in our history save Lincoln and the second Adams, who was inaugurated in March of 1913. An early appreciation of that fact may have led Wilson in his inaugural address to interpret his election as "more than the mere success of a party," and to "summon all honest men, all patriotic, all forward-looking men" to his side. It was also a minority Congress [1] to whom he read his first message in April. And yet at that time, in no uncertain way, he called upon his party as- sociates to carry out the pledge of a Democratic tariff revision.

The task before President Wilson was that of giving pause to the decline that the party had suffered ever since the more

---

[1] The Democratic majorities in both Senate and House were due to the division of the Republican vote in Senatorial and Congressional elections. Anaylsis of this may be found in "Minority Rule," in *Sewanee Review* (October, 1914).

radical elements had captured control. He had to accomplish it while pledged to the enactment of the measures so repeatedly rejected by the electorate, and while depending for much of his support upon members of the party that had never been in full sympathy with the "new Democracy of 1896." His policies had been outlined by a Western Democracy, while the bulk of his Congressional majorities were from the South. With an immediacy of determination rare in a minority ruler, President Wilson induced a reluctant Congress to enact three Democratic proposals of long standing. In forcing Democratic legislation upon the tariff, the currency, and the "trusts," he had the fullest backing of Bryan, the lukewarm sympathy of the Southern chairmen through whom he had to act, and the partially veiled hostility of powerful Eastern journals, which had long waited for a Democratic President to uphold the traditions of Tilden and Cleveland, and which still professed to believe that harsh criticism of the minority President would bring about the desired end.

Events beyond the President's control led him to place the party in its traditional and little understood attitude upon foreign affairs. Disturbances in Mexico, a dispute with England, and a reversal of policy in China, all of them legacies of a period of Republican rule, brought vividly before the voter the lack of aggressive tone and the essentially democratic policy of the men in charge of the government. The party's proposal to grant independence to the Phillippine Islands was only spared a general condemnation by delay in forcing the issue.

While Wilson's initial steps in office indicated a desire to subordinate partizan considerations in filling public offices, the return of the Democracy to power after many years of exile compelled the President to countenance a partizan régime in Washington. Indeed, everything combined to bring the Democratic party before the country in its distinctly partizan character. Little or no opportunity was provided for

the President, as in his inaugural address, to call upon the progressive men of all parties. The occasional non-partizan support was lost sight of in the din of partizan rejoicing. The President himself grew more, not less, partizan in his tone. The nature of his indorsements of Democratic candidates for office became such as greatly to surprise Progressives and Progressive Republicans who had professed to find encouragement in his earlier declarations of non-partizan purposes.

At the outset he had assumed command of the party organization. There was declaration of independence in his utterance, "I am not the servant of the Democratic party," and declaration of determination in the statement, "I am the servant of the people acting through the Democratic party." The control of a party organization and the will to legislate "the purpose of the people" gave Wilson the success that he achieved before the end of the first year of his administration. With the use of party majorities he caused to be enacted an imposing array of legislation, properly termed a party program, for it became law, not because of the widespread progressive sympathy with parts of it or the support of it by independents both in and out of Congress, but because the Democratic organization responded easily and, after a period of hesitation, willingly, to the direction of its leader. This party organization made a special effort to obtain from the electorate a favorable verdict in the Congressional elections of 1914, but only because of the continued division of the normal vote for Republican candidates were the Democrats able to obtain majorities in both Houses of the Congress that met in 1915.

Meanwhile the Insurgent or Progressive Republican movement had been weakened in the House of Representatives. In the Senate it seemed to be about where it was prior to the Roosevelt candidacy. In the organization of the House in 1913, five western Republicans had refused to vote for the caucus nominee for Speaker. Upon the tariff roll-calls in the

Senate a group of western Republicans voted frequently with the Democratic Finance Committee. These included Borah, LaFollette, Gronna, Kenyon, Cummins, Jones, Crawford, Bristow, Poindexter, Sterling, Clapp, and Norris. The significance of the continuity of the western revolt is increased by a reference to the sentiments of the members of the group as expressed in this tariff debate.

The western Senators attacked the Democratic procedure; first, because the bill was prepared by the Democratic members of the committee and then submitted to, and approved by, a secret Democratic caucus; and second, because of the discrimination against western products. Senator Cummins prefaced his argument as to the discrimination shown in the making of the bill with this statement: " . . . with the exception of the final caucus, the proceedings this year are a practical repetition of the proceedings attending the Payne-Aldrich bill in 1909. They were indefensible then; they are indefensible now. The Republican leadership in 1909 was willing to exclude the minority of the finance committee from participation in making up the bill, but, bold as it was, it was not rash enough to attempt the revival of the tyrannical rule of the caucus." In putting forward the proposals of the western men he said: "The Progressive Republicans charted the way in 1909, and they will chart it again in 1913." During the Congress, 1913-1915, this group of a dozen "Independent Republicans" maintained a unity of program and usually agreed in action.

This continuance of revolt was not surprising. The northern Mississippi valley had for more than twenty years been the home of movements "to restore the government to the people." Not always had it stressed peculiar economic needs upon the tariff or the currency, but invariably it had waged war upon the "power of money in politics." It early became convinced, and at last had made articulate the conviction, that

private liberty ought to be restricted in the interests of public liberty. Its demand for improved machinery of parties and governments was an effort to attain that end. The Progressive Republican leaders had, first and last, achieved election and held office, not because of position upon the tariff revision or the regulation of railways, although each of these had had greatest influence at times, but because they represented the desire of the great portion of their constituency to participate in their government, state and national.

The success of the advocates of publicity in the West, and consequently their appearance in Congress, had been due not only to the peculiar economic needs of the Middle West but also to the independent position of the greater number of the voters. Economically they have been free, and politically they have been alert to follow the leader who voiced their desire to make the government the agent, not of aggregations of men banded together for private profit, but of the individual men who make up the electorate.

Their leaders, raised to power, had voiced these desires in Congress. It had brought them into conflict with the Republican organization not in sympathy with the proposed changes because based on different industrial and social conditions, and later into conflict with the Democratic organization, still largely in the hands of men who were not as familiar with the demands of the independent voters. Thus as East and South had successively been in power, the West continued to manifest sectionalism through its votes in Congress.

That the Democratic party retained control of the government in the 1914 elections in spite of the partial disappearence of the Progressive party and the consequent returning strength of the Republican opposition, seemed to indicate the most remarkable change in political sentiment since 1894. That the party had changed its character or its appeal, there was no evidence. That a considerable number of voters had come to

its support since 1912 seemed, on the surface, to be the indication of the election returns.

That this gain was, in reality, an aftermath of the Republican schism of 1912 and not an important promise for the future soon became evident. Considering the nation-wide vote, the verdict of the electorate upon the performance of the Democracy had been the same as that given repeatedly to the proposals of the party during the preceding eighteen years. Whether the Democracy had actually continued to decline in popular support, as it had from 1896 to 1912, could not be determined definitely until after another Presidential election. That Wilson, before the electorate by proxy, proved little if any stronger than in 1912, was the outstanding feature of the election of 1914.

By the time of the assembling of this Congress (1915) the Democratic organization, as led by the President and his immediate advisors, had taken its basic position upon the questions growing out of the European War. This position was not willingly accepted by all members of the Democratic party in Congress, as in earlier months neither the President's policy toward Mexico nor his recommendation as to the repeal of the Panama Tolls Act had been pleasing to some of the more prominent leaders of the party. There were numerous skirmishes which gave delight to the opposition, and finally ensued a fight for control, lasting several months, at the end of which the Democratic Insurgents were chastened but not subdued. Previous to this Bryan had left the Cabinet.

Minute examination of the speeches and the votes in Congress does not reveal a party policy for either the Democrats or the Republicans on the issues growing out of the European War. The alignments were those of racial prejudice, national sentiment, or pacifist conviction. Neither party organization would or could declare itself. Finally in the case of the armed-ship controversy there was no party policy except that pro-

posed by the President. The opposition, so vehemently expressed in the Senate, came from seven Republicans and five Democrats.

The party convention of 1916, by its declaration of principles and its acceptance of the leadership of the President, gave final and eloquent testimony to the completeness of the change that had been accomplished within the party. In his speech of acceptance in September, the President assumed an aggressive tone in defense of the record of the Democratic party. Through a well ordered and enthusiastic national committee the appeal of the party was effectively presented to the country.

The Progressive Party, so patently in the main current of American public opinion at the time of its appearance in 1912, had gradually lost its most strategic position. In December of 1912 more than twelve hundred of its adherents had met in conference, and resolved upon an aggressive campaign of organization, but this had failed of important result; in the Congressional elections of 1914 the vote of the party sank to less than two million. Three causes were discernible; the success of Wilson in the use of the Democratic party as an agent of a considerable economic and social reform weakened the interest of the social reformers, at best little interested in a political party as such; the outbreak of the European War in 1914 gradually led all men of whatever persuasion to seek traditional means of expressing their wishes in politics; finally, the weakness of this third party in local and state contests, in face of the tradition and the experience of the two dominant parties, made it clear that no voluntary party organization could hope to endure unless it had an aggressive and definite program of paramount interest to the members of the party. The endurance of the party in certain states, notably in California, where the former Republican organization had completely disappeared, merely proved the obvious.

During the years 1913–1916 the Republican national organization was in the doldrums. No committee on a national scale could be got together without reviving painful memories of the violence of the quarrel in 1912. The National Committee in 1913 recommended a fundamental change in apportionment of delegates which gave added strength to the actual voters. In local and state matters the Progressive and Republican leaders were acting together as early as the autumn of 1913. At no time could it be said with surety that the potential Democratic strength was equal to that of a united Republican party. The outbreak of the European War brought upon the Republican party, as it had upon the Democratic party, a fight for the control of the organization over issues that grew out of that great conflict. At the same time there was an increase in the natural desire for a united effort in this time of crisis. It has always been difficult to determine with certainty the exact position upon public questions of a party out of power. An attempt may be made to judge its views from the utterances of well recognized leaders and from the actions in public office of men known to be of the party organization. Such a test has been applied with difficulty to the Republican party during this period of its exile from power. It has not been helpful to cite the late Theodore Roosevelt as an exponent of a Republican program in 1915, not because in the eyes of many Republicans he had ceased to be a Republican by his action in 1912, but because he was distinctly not a member of the Republican organization after that event. The most powerful attack upon the Wilson administration was that of Elihu Root, made in February of 1916. Actions and votes of Republicans in Congress revealed several groups. Republican platforms were confined for the most part to a general denunciation of the party in power. Ex-President Taft, a prominent Republican because of his eminence, but not a member of the Republican organization, put forth his reasons for opposing the

reëlection of Wilson, but they were not reasons that made wide appeal to western leaders of the party.

But when the Republican convention met in Chicago in June of 1916 it appeared that the Insurgent revolt was temporarily in abeyance. The Progressive convention which met at the same time in the same city, was dominated by Rooseveltians rather than Insurgents. It was plain that in a union of forces there was hope of defeating the Democratic ticket. The chief avenue to common action was a similarity of views on foreign policy. The Progressives nominated Roosevelt; but the Republicans, after passing in review a group of favorite sons, all except one of whom were conservative, chose on the third ballot, Charles E. Hughes, who had been governor of New York, and more recently, a Justice of the United States Supreme Court. The selection of Charles W. Fairbanks as candidate for Vice-President completed the work of the convention. Roosevelt subsequently declined the Progressive nomination, and no substitute was provided. Candidates and committees of the Republicans made it evident how important to success they considered Progressive votes yet toward the close of the campaign the Roosevelt support was considered, by some, a weakness. The defeat of Hughes left the party organization in the hands of the men of conservative persuasion.

In reëlecting President Wilson and returning Democratic majorities in both House and Senate the electorate seemed at last to accept Democratic rule. But there were several factors that seemed to deny this conclusion. The opposition party had with great difficulty secured a fair cohesion in its convention, and the activities of the national committee had soon displayed a divided council. Inept as the chairman of the committee proved in dealing with this situation, there was an even greater weakness in the campaign of the candidate himself, well expressed by a leading Republican when he said,

after the result was known, that the Republican campaign had been, after all, a weak echo of that of the Democrats. Despite these conditions the Republican ticket was victorious in the East and Middle West, the vote well expressing the aversion to the rule of the Democratic party in the populous areas of the conutry. Only by carrying Ohio and New Hampshire and thirteen states west of the Mississippi, as well as the usual Southern states, did the Democrats win.

Hughes polled 8,538,221 votes, slightly more than 46 per cent. of the total vote cast. He was defeated by a majority of 591,385 votes. Of the electoral vote the majority for Wilson was only 23, but this was not a fair indication of the overwhelming defeat of the Republican nominee. Even though Hughes had nearly a million more votes than had been cast for Taft and Roosevelt in 1912, Wilson, his opponent, as he had been their opponent, had in 1916 nearly three million more votes than in 1912. This tremendous increase was widely spread over the country. In every state in the Union, except four, Wilson carried more counties than had any previous Democratic nominee. The exceptions were in Louisiana, where he lost ground slightly, the gain going to the headless Progressive ticket; in Wisconsin, where the loss was also slight and where he had four years before made considerable gains; and in New Jersey and Delaware, where he held as many counties as in 1912. But, the nation over, he carried 2,023 of 3,020 counties, and increased his lead over the vote of four years before by approximately 600 counties.

This swing of small voting units was of greater significance than was the swing of certain of the states, in that it revealed the national scope of the Republican defeat as the electoral vote did not, and in that it furnished ground for the belief that there was in 1916 a shift of votes to the Democratic ticket, and not merely an increase in the number of votes cast for the ticket—a shift that was, in locality and in degree, a novel

phenomenon in the party voting of the preceding twenty years. Seventy of these new Democratic counties were in states of the East and older Middle West. It was this shift of votes, notably in Ohio, and the nature of the abrupt decision in some states, that later led some commentators to minimize the importance of the apparent return to the Republicans in the Congressional elections of 1918, and to assert that, in reality from the commencement of the Presidential campaign of 1920, it rested upon the Republicans to take the aggressive to insure a reasonable chance at taking the decision in November of 1920.

The Democratic party, in winning the election of 1916, retained complete control of the National Government. Had it not been for the advent of a war that for a moment obliterated party lines only to create divisions of a deeper intensity, such a decision might have ushered in a period in which a great majority of the electorate would have accepted the triumphant party with much the same finality that had characterized its acceptance of the outcome of the election of 1896. But a great minority, comprising the greater number of those accustomed to national power prior to 1913, held to the same view that they frequently expressed in discussing the minority victory of Wilson in 1912, and refused to recognize the impressive mandate of 1916 as indicative of any permanent change. The country, they said, was, as always, normally Republican.

The dramatic events that accompanied the American entrance into the World War showed vividly the apparent looseness of party ties in times of crisis. The organization elements in both parties were for following the President into war, although they differed in their reasons for doing so. But among the Congressmen and Senators who bore the party label there were members who did not follow as the President led. Most of these individuals had never been in either of the national organizations. They represented sectional, and in some cases,

personal, protest. It is quite correct to say that in the entrance into war party lines were obliterated only to appear when the organization of the Republican party attempted first to share, and then to take, the control of the government.

The Congressional elections of 1916 had given the Republicans a power in the House nearly equal to that of the Democrats, and the Democratic majority in the Senate had been reduced to ten. There occurred in the winter of 1917–18 a sharp fight between the two party organizations, at the close of which the Democratic organization was still in control, weakened though it was by lack of public confidence and by the defection of certain prominent Democratic leaders. But the Democratic party organization, responding as it did to the direction of President Wilson, kept control and brought the war to an end. Just before the Armistice, that organization,—through the medium of the President himself,—appealed to the electorate for a vote of indorsement. There was a platform in the peace program of the President. The fight between the rival organizations had reached a point in the Congress, where it was altogether impossible for a satisfactory government to proceed. The air was only partially cleared by the outcome of the Congressional elections of 1918, for although by that vote the Republican organization was again to be in the control of the Congress, yet the President was by full term of office in possession of the executive branch of the government until March of 1921.

The Republican organization, dominant as always among the more conservative members of the Senate, and influencing the votes of practically all of the Republicans of that body, was able to defeat the program that the President brought back from Paris. The most violent opposition came from western men. Defeat of the President was accomplished in spite of the fact that the Republican party representation in the Senate was divided upon the merits of the case. But

the organization held its control of party, even though by a narrow margin. It set about consummating its work by the election of a reliable adherent of the organization to the Presidency. It need not be asserted that it chose to have one of its own members. But the party organization, as early as 1918, made it clear that it intended to dominate the campaign of 1920. It was able, as the event proved, to write the platform and to name the candidate.

The period of minority rule had witnessed three developments in party activity, each of which had had important beginnings in an earlier period, but which now manifested themselves more effectively. There were, first of all, various organizations carrying on propaganda to insure a maintenance of international peace, but the outbreak of the European war greatly emphasized their purpose and led to increased activity and to multiplication of agencies. In addition to the American League to Limit Armament, the American League against Militarism, there was a Woman's Peace Party, and the League to Enforce Peace. None of these entered the field as a political party, but each carried on many typical party functions. The most vivid expression of the extremist view was that found in the People's Council for Democracy which attempted in the spring of 1917 to continue the campaign against war.

In the second place, despite the nature of the Progressive appeal in 1912, there had been a very great increase in the vote of more violent protest. The years that immediately followed were marked by increasing manifestations of class warfare. The campaign for preparedness gave added zest to the opposition of the extremists, and in the summer of 1916 reached a popular crisis in a bomb outrage in San Francisco. But the indefiniteness of the organizations of all radicals made it impossible to state with accuracy the extent of their influence at the time.

Finally there were the evidences of the renewal of the polit-

ical revolt of the less prosperous farmer. In this case, however, the avenue chosen was not that of a separate political party, but of an organized movement to capture control of one of the existent parties. This came as a natural result of the increase of the demand for the means of expressing the desire of the voter in nominations as well as in elections. The Non-partizan League captured the Republican organization machinery in North Dakota in 1915, and thereafter made it expressive of the purposes of the organized farmers. The movement spread rapidly, and emphasized as never before the chasm between a party of voters and a party of leaders. Much was made of the difference between the leaders and the rank and file of the new party, but the fact remained that the strength of the movement rested with the voter, and that therein there was a greater danger to the continuance of the former method of party manipulation than had appeared at any earlier time. It was clear, however, that the movement would make headway in the national field only by an alliance with forces in other parts of the country and from other economic interests.

In the preliminaries of the Republican campaign, there was indication of the former dissension between progressives supporting Senator Hiram Johnson and conservatives supporting Governor Frank O. Lowden of Illinois. Johnson seemed to have the advantage with the rank and file of the party, to the extent that they expressed themselves. But neither Lowden, Johnson, nor Leonard Wood, who inherited some of the Roosevelt following, as well as kept the support of a portion of the conservatives, was able to secure a majority vote.[2] The nomination of Senator Warren G. Harding of Ohio was the natural result of the temper and make-up of the convention.

---

[2] The widespread independent canvass to present the name of Herbert Hoover had lost ground after his declaration as a Republican, and his candidacy was of little moment at the Republican convention.

Again in the campaign of 1920 an attempt was made to fuse the various elements of political revolt. The Committee of Forty-eight was the most vigorous, as well as the most recent agency, in the group of nine that attempted amalgamation. The outcome in convention was on the whole more favorable to the labor elements than to any other, but the discussion had revealed bitterness and deep antagonism, and the final protest in November was feeble. Political reform by use of a new party seemed a long and uncertain road to men sufficiently aware of the situation to leave the older parties.

At the opening of the Presidential campaign of 1920 the Democratic organization, having lost the firm guidance of its leader, and, weakened by its recent rejection by the electorate, seemed doomed to play a minority part. Members of the group that had dominated for eight years were either unable or unwilling to take control of the party convention at San Francisco. Some of its members made a valiant fight, but in the end the party organization fell into the hands of "habitual Democrats," representing local Democratic machines and most of whom had not been close to the record or the purpose of the party during the preceding eight years. The candidate, Governor James M. Cox of Ohio, in spite of the platform that by itself was a natural expression of Wilson's conception of his leadership, and in spite of the support of a considerable body of independents, was overwhelmingly defeated by the candidate of the Republican organization supported, as he was, by the numerous dissatisfied elements that make up an opposition vote.

Wilson had accepted the Democratic party as it appeared in Congress and rejected it as represented by powerful local machines. He had governed through "Party," but it was party in the sense of a group of public officials bearing the party label, rather than party made up of extra-legal organiza-

tions engaged in pursuit of office. He expressed a possible distinction when he said, succinctly, "I have no interest in the political party, except as an instrument of achievement." If we were to judge from the Democratic campaign of 1920 and from the status of the Democratic party at Washington in March of 1921, we would say that the Democratic party organization appeared much as it did when Wilson became the leader. The party membership included a considerable minority of the population, drawing largely from the South, from the strongholds of local Democratic machines in the cities of the North, and from areas in the Middle and Far West where a considerable number of voters still clung to the party of Andrew Jackson. After eight years as the instrument of government, the party resumed a rôle made familiar by long experience. And the Republican party, a coalition of many factions and numerous leaders, essayed the task that had proved its undoing twelve years before.[3]

The administration of Harding covering a period of twenty-nine months did not materially alter the alignment of interests within the Republican party. The President's conception of party leadership made it possible for the regular party organization to dominate in the administrative domain of party interest, particularly in matters of routine and of patronage, at the same time that it permitted, indeed encouraged, the continued development in Congress of the programs, as well as the reputation, of various powerful and ambitious chieftains. Thus in 1923, as in 1903, the Republican party was a coalition of leaders and of interests, only more so. The open break of 1912 was barely a memory, and an unpleasant one.

[3] And it was the usual task. "Under ordinary circumstances the work of persuading the executive and legislature to work in harmony under the somewhat strained conditions presented by the United States constitution seems more important than the passing of any particular measures; and that side of party organization naturally and inevitably comes to the front." A. T. Hadley, *Freedom and Responsibility*, 20.

Congress became the arena in which, as never before, unless just a hundred years earlier, the warring elements were representative of the different sections of the country, and back of them of the opposing economic interests. Party responsibility ceased to form the enduring bond of union. The outstanding figures were insurgents, not regulars. This was the more marked in that the mood of the country in 1922 was not that of 1909 or 1913. Most conspicuous and most powerful, and it is fair to say, chiefly because of consistency of career as well as of program, was Senator LaFollette of Wisconsin. The party leaders, as well as the party membership, when expressions were revealed, were as seriously divided on foreign policy as in 1919–20.

In the meantime, the Democratic party enacted its well-accustomed rôle without untoward incident. Its most conspicuous spokesmen were silent, or when they did speak sparingly, either reiterated the position and mood of 1920 or called upon the Democracy to essay the path of "reform." There were powerful elements within the party with developed programs to meet the needs of the new day, but they were unobtrusive. They seemed as willing to play the waiting game as did the chieftains of the state machines, and the Chairman of the Democratic National Committee, who on various occasions took opportunity to point out the weaknesses and iniquities of the Republican rule.

If a view of the party organizations and of the situation in Congress disclosed familiar landmarks, so, too, did a glance at the elements of dissent outside of the accustomed party membership. Existing groups grew in membership. There was revival, in more coöperative mood, of the attempts at amalgamation of various elements of dissatisfaction. The proposed candidacy of Henry Ford added not only piquancy to discussion, but a popular and seemingly feasible method of amalgamation, for election purposes.

The succession of Vice-President Coolidge failed to change the general outlines of the situation. In the Congress, when it met in December of 1923, the two parties were so matched that in both House and Senate a faction of independent Republicans held the balance of power. Most of them acknowledged in Congress the leadership of Senator LaFollette. In the House they were able to force concessions from the Republican organization, and it was noticeable that their outstanding interest was, as it had been during the Taft administration, in revision of the rules of the House. The Senate witnessed a struggle of several weeks over the election of a chairman of the Committee on Interstate Commerce. This seemingly unimportant matter was the means of revealing the actual party alignment in the Senate. Several members, formerly classed as progressives, notably Cummins, Borah and Johnson, voted most of the time with the Republican organization. The greater number of the group led by LaFollette were men who had come to the Senate since 1910, most of them were from the Middle West, and they included those elected by the Farmer-Labor party. With a single exception, the Democratic membership maintained its unity. The final outcome resulted in the election of a Democrat to the chairmanship, the vote of the Democratic membership and an increasing number of Republicans bringing this about.

With the opening of the Presidential year there was general agreement that the probable opposing candidates would be President Coolidge and former-Secretary William G. McAdoo, with the certainty of a powerful third party of protest, led, possibly, by Senator LaFollette. The Oil scandal, beginning with the exposure of a former Secretary of the Interior, and ever widening, tended to weaken both Coolidge and McAdoo in the eyes of the general public; McAdoo, because of his service for one of the oil magnates implicated; Coolidge, because of his lack of vigorous and immediate action. But

there seemed little evidence that the party managers were affected in like manner. The forced retirement of the Secretary of the Navy and the dismissal of the Attorney General emphasized in a vivid way the plight of the Republican organization.

## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

General political background in F. A. Ogg, *National Progress* (1918); but see in particular F. L. Paxson, *Recent History of the United States* (1921); also, Charles Seymour, *Woodrow Wilson and the World War* (1921).

The activities of the Democratic party are more easily understood after a use of W. E. Dodd, *Woodrow Wilson and His Work* (Second Edition, 1921); see also H. J. Ford, *Woodrow Wilson* (1916).

The personal politics of the period are mirrored well in J. J. Leary, *Talks with Theodore Roosevelt* (1920); see also, W. F. McCombs, *Making Woodrow Wilson President* (1921); Champ Clark, *My Quarter Century of American Politics* (1920); Lane and Wall (editors), *The Letters of Franklin K. Lane* (1922); J. P. Tumulty, *Woodrow Wilson as I Know Him* (1921).

Special movements are presented in Arthur Capper, *The Agricultural Bloc* (1923); C. E. Russell, *The Story of the Non-Partisan League* (1920); A. A. Bruce, *The Non-Partisan League* (1922); H. E. Gaston, *The Non-Partisan League* (1920).

Special articles include W. E. Dodd, "Social and Economic Background of Woodrow Wilson," in the *Journal of Political Economy*, XXV, 201; E. E. Robinson, "Woodrow Wilson and the Democratic Party," in the *Pacific Review*, March, 1921; E. E. Robinson, "Minority Rule," in the *Sewanee Review*, October, 1914.

Irving Fisher, "Explaining the Nation's Vote," in *New York Times*, March 6, 1921.

Also in manuscript in the Stanford University Library two monographs: H. F. Desmond, *Independent Republicans in the Senate, 1913–15* (1918); W. D. Seay, *American Political Parties and the Great War, 1914–1917* (1923).

"As compared with other democratic countries, the essential function of party in the United States lies not so much in presenting alternatives on public questions, as in presenting alternative candidates for election; and this is illustrated by the fact that people habitually pay less attention to the national party platforms than to the personal statements of the candidates for the presidency."

A. L. LOWELL, *Public Opinion in War and Peace*, 194.

# CHAPTER XVIII

## REALITIES IN PARTY LIFE

Basis for the two-party alignment in the United States—Conditions out of which the American party developed—Changes due to the establishment of a general government—The conceptions of party prior to 1830—The third conception of party as expressed since 1830—Evidences of the struggle of opposing forces within American political parties—Basic changes in the make-up of the nation—Continuance of the older traditions—Need of a new conception of party—Indications of its existence—Question of the primary function of party—Realities.

AT the beginning of this sketch of the evolution of American political parties it was suggested that the peculiar conditions out of which the American party system had developed might in large measure explain the inapplicability of existent American parties to the needs of the present day. James Bryce suggested a possible basis for this point of view when he wrote: "The parties of the United States are pure home growths, developed by the circumstances of the nation."[1] The great circumstance which governed the building of the nation governed the formation of parties as well, that is, the task of peopling the continent. English colonists, in taking foothold on the Atlantic seaboard, governed themselves in local affairs, partly by intention, but chiefly by reason of the distance from the home country and the necessities of a frontier community. Except for the smallest of local concerns, comparatively few immigrants had had a part in government in England. In theory they were of the Commons, but in fact their active participation in more than local government began in America. Few of them had a part in election of members to Parliament,

[1] *The American Commonwealth*, II, 5.

but a considerable number came to elect members to a colonial assembly. Actual self-government in any more than purely local matters began in America.

The fundamental division of public opinion in each of the colonies was between the upholders of the Governor who represented the Home Government, and the supporters of the Assembly who in theory represented the inhabitants of the colony and in reality the voters who were a small proportion of the inhabitants. Throughout the colonial period there was a continuous struggle for power between these two claimants for control. In this contest much was made of the right of a people to govern themselves. In time this claim which was an outgrowth of political controversy with a sovereign, aided by the general tendency to stress the equality of men on the frontier, led to a gradual enlargement of the electorate.

With the opening of the contest for "Home Rule," that is, the contest termed the Revolution, there was a continuance of the struggle between the Governor and the Assembly. But also there was the struggle of elements hitherto without the franchise, or inadequately represented, to obtain a voice in their own government. It was, as has been said, to find out "who should rule at home."

In the struggle between those who supported a governor and those who in the legislature opposed him, we have duplicated the struggle of King and Parliament in England; a contest not only between the executive and legislative powers for control, but also between the elements back of these agencies. In such a struggle in the Amercian colonies there can be found little semblance of party and it is of little significance. There was too restricted a franchise and too barren an objective. But with the widening of the franchise, with the emphasis upon political rights, with the triumph of legislative power, there arose an alignment between those privileged classes who would maintain the *status quo* except for the absence of monarchical

power and those who would greatly increase the popular participation, chiefly through the frequency of elections and the provision of manhood suffrage. Such an alignment made for the organization of political parties, for only by such means—the marshalling of voters behind certain leaders, pledged to certain proposals—could control of the government be obtained. Thus with the disappearance of what may be termed the English alignment of political interests in America, we have the beginning of an American political alignment.

As the English colonies had developed in size and importance they had widened the scope of their governing powers. A governing class developed in each community, comparatively small because of limitations upon the franchise, but governing in the name of the people. As the colonists spread westward, the pioneers on successive frontiers acknowledged allegiance to the colonial governments, but frequently of necessity and often by assertive claim, governed themselves. Before the Revolution a considerable amount of dissent on the part of the pioneer elements had developed in each of the older colonies. In some cases prior to 1776 the lines between these elements were so clearly drawn as to warrant calling them temporary parties. These represented different economic and social strata in society; they differed also in their views of the functions of government and their conception of party.

A greater degree of liberty, as understood by Englishmen, was the goal set by many of the men who had crossed the ocean. Civil liberty continued to animate the thoughts of these transplanted Englishmen. To attain an even greater civil liberty they fought the Revolution. Liberty was presumably assured under the government they constructed. But in the years that stretched from the meeting of the first representative assembly in Virginia in 1619 to the convening of the First Federal Congress in 1789, there had developed in America another ideal, that of equality. Such an ideal was an

early but slow growth. This sense of equality grew as men moved westward away from the restraints, not only of Europe, but of the American seaboard communities. On the successive frontiers, life was for the time reduced to the primitive. All had the same chance and the opportunities seemed ample for all. A common task, land for the asking and the clearing, made possible a sense of economic equality which broke social bonds of classes and led to the demand for political equality. It was a natural outcome that the widening of the franchise and the strengthening of the position of the voter has come as a result of agitation in the West from Jefferson's famous protest for western Virginia in 1781 and even earlier, to the adoption of the important amendments in California in 1910, and subsequent agitation for further extension. From first to last the American democrat has seemed to realize, even though vaguely at times, that effective participation in government would depend upon the creation of agencies to carry over the popular will.

These two desirable attainments, liberty and equality, came to be the demands of pioneering Americans. But although in Europe, particularly in France, the same words were being used, it is to fall into grievous error to suppose the meanings were the same in the minds of those who used them. Liberty, even on the American frontier, was a developed English liberty. Equality in America was a realized American equality. In neither case were they thought to be absolute, except by partizans and extremists.

Parties were not recognized in the new Government set up under the Constitution, but an alignment of interests had been revealed by the fight upon its adoption, and political groupings early appeared in the Congress of the new Government. It was not in the division of economic interest upon the proposals of Hamilton that the two conceptions of party were best revealed; neither was it in the great division upon

the extent of constitutional powers that there was a basic differ-
ence between the later Federalist and Republican parties. It
was rather that there were revealed two conceptions of the
function of party, for there were two motives moving men
to use parties at this time. To one group, party was the agency
by which selected representatives governed for the nation.
Party in this sense had been a familiar agency for many years
before the Revolution. It was party in an English sense. To
the other group party was an agency by which the mass of the
people were accorded greater influence, aided to act in their
own interest, and to govern themselves. This was the party
group, like the committees of correspondence, that had been
so instrumental in leading and controlling public sentiment
during the Revolution. Each group erected a party organiza-
tion in its own image, one representative of a party of the
"best people," the other representative of all the people.
Hamilton appealed to all of those who looked to England
for example and guidance. Jefferson's views found natural
response among those recently enfranchised, and particularly
those of the outlying settlements. Party organizations, as we
understand them, were of slow growth, and played little part
in this early division.

The two conceptions of party continued to animate Amer-
ican politics for forty years, and appear to influence the align-
ment even to this day. The repeated necessity for greater
stability in government finance and the increasing need of
protection for national interests frequently added weight to
the conviction of those who believed in the government of
leaders. The division of powers provided in the Constitution
strengthened this group. This consideration profoundly
affected Jefferson in his administration of the government,
and also his immediate successors in the Presidency. The
renewal of the pioneer life on every frontier from western
Virginia to the Oregon country renewed again and again the

fervent belief of the American pioneers in the justice and the advantage of rule by the people. It was, however, a faith rather than a reasoned belief. These two conceptions have seemed to form the basis for a fundamental alignment in American politics. But there have been many electoral contests in which the conception of popular rule has been unrepresented; when, as far as the great parties were concerned, any outcome meant the triumph of a small group. Within each party there have been men more in agreement on particular issues with their opponents than with their party associates, but they have been held to their original party by a vaguely felt but frequently expressed, belief in either leaders or people.[2] That has been thought to be the fundamental difference in party contests; and founded in the conditions which made America, it has been an enduring alignment.

Whereas these divergent views as to the purpose of party continued to animate great bodies of voters, and statements of them appeared repeatedly in party platforms, for ninety years there has been a third impelling purpose, that has, in reality, quite banished the first two purposes from the realm of practical politics. This purpose has been represented by the party organization. It is not the leader and his coterie, nor the segment of votes brought together for election day, but it is the organization extending from a central body, such as at one time exemplified by Jackson's "Kitchen Cabinet," down to the smallest precinct committee. The national party organization now remains in action every day of the year. This is the "party" that has dominated American politics since 1830, no matter who has won the election.

Woodrow Wilson expressed the opinion in 1908 that this development was an outgrowth of a too complete adoption

[2] Recent notable expressions have been the Republican case for guidance of "the best minds" in the campaign of 1920, and Bryan's query, "Shall the People Rule?" in 1908.

of the Whig doctrines prevalent in England at the time of
the adoption of the Federal Constitution. This it was, he
contended, that led to the omission of any driving power in
the Constitution.

"It is for that reason that we have had such an extra-
ordinary development of party authority in the United States,
and have developed outside the government itself so elaborate
and effective an organization of parties. They are absolutely
necessary to hold the things thus disconnected and dispersed
together and give some coherence to the action of political
forces. There are, as I have already explained in another
connection, so many officers to be elected that even the prep-
aration of lists of candidates is too complicated and laborious
a business to be undertaken by men busy about other things.
Some one must make a profession of attending to it must give
it system and method. A few candidates for a few conspicu-
ous offices which interested everybody, the voters themselves
might select in the intervals of private business; but a multi-
tude of candidates for offices great and small they cannot
choose; and after they are chosen and elected to offices they are
still a multitude, and there must be somebody to look after
them in the discharge of their functions, somebody to observe
them closely in action, in order that they may be assessed
against the time when they are to be judged. Each has his own
little legal domain; there is no interdependence among them,
no interior organization to hold them together. There must,
therefore, be an exterior organization, voluntarily formed and
independent of the law. whose object it shall be to bind them
together in some sort of harmony and coöperation. That
exterior organization is the political party. The hierarchy of
its officers must supply the place of a hierarchy of legally
constituted officials." [2]

May it not be a mistake to place the entire responsibility

[2] Woodrow Wilson, *Constitutional Government in the United States*, 206–207.

upon the Whig tradition? This purpose did not reach full growth until forty years after the Constitution had been adopted. It came into general recognition with the development of the railway and the spread of population into distant areas. In a word, this conception of party—a comparatively small organization bound together to win elections and to make possible a unity of action in government—this purpose of party arose, as the earlier purposes had arisen, out of an American need.

From such a point of view it may be helpful to summarize the significant changes in party life which have come in the last one hundred years. The rise of the new West in the period that followed the second war with England brought into a position of political power a great section of country where economic equality and personal independence made for an insistent demand for political equality. This region, which included all west of the Appalachian Mountains and some areas in western New York and Pennsylvania east of the mountains, accepted Andrew Jackson as its spokesman. It was an event of transcendent importance when, as a result of a campaign of popular appeal, he was elected by an unprecedented majority. By his election an administration rooted in popular support was placed in power. There presently appeared a new alignment of parties in the Congress, a party of Democrats in support of the President and two parties in opposition, disagreeing greatly on the issues before the electorate, but both devoted to the return to government by a group of leaders. The basic division was not revealed upon the question of nullification, nor the disposal of public lands, nor the enactment of a new tariff, which fill the pages of American political history. It was revealed when Jackson attacked the United States Bank. In that struggle was shown, as never so vividly before and only once or twice since, a fundamental division of the electorate that would persist as long as

the period of colonization in America should last, or its effects be determinative. There were the democrats on the one side, and there was the opposition, whose cardinal view embodied the wisdom of leaders and the advantages of the orderly process in government.

But such an alignment did not remain salient. The Democratic party organization passed into the control or at least became subject upon occasion to the control, of southern men whose overshadowing interest was in the protection and extension of the system of negro slavery. It still enlisted the enthusiastic support of the masses of workingmen in the North, and in insuring the adherence of this great body of voters and in the vigorous life of the organization activities in the pioneer west the new type of party manager showed again and again his value to the party.

The opposition, properly termed the Whig coalition, for it never achieved even the loose cohesion of its opponent, continued to test strength at election time with the Democrats. It, like the earlier Federalist party, contained many outstanding men, but failed signally to lead public opinion and when twice it attained a partial control of the national government, it did not provide an effective administration.

Of these two parties Emerson wrote in 1844:

". . . . one has the best cause, and the other contains the best men. The philosopher, the poet or the religious man will, of course, wish to cast his vote with the democrat for free trade, for wide suffrage, for the abolition of legal cruelties in the penal code, and for facilitating in every manner the access of the young and the poor to the sources of wealth and power. But he can rarely accept the persons whom the so-called popular party propose to him as representatives of these liberalities. They have not at heart the ends which give to the name of democracy what hope and virtue are in it. The spirit of our American radicalism is destructive and

aimless; it is not loving, it has no ulterior and divine ends; but it is destructive only out of hate and selfishness. On the other side, the conservative party composed of the most moderate, able, and cultivated part of the population, is timid and merely defensive of property. It vindicates no right, it aspires to no real good, it brands no crime, it proposes no generous policy, it does not build nor write nor cherish the arts, nor foster religion, nor establish schools, nor encourage science, nor emancipate the slave, nor befriend the poor, or the Indian or the immigrant. From neither party, when in power, has the world any benefit to expect in science, art, or humanity, at all commensurate with the resources of the nation."[4]

To meet the need outlined by this interested bystander there arose after several abortive attempts a third party movement in the pioneer West. The new Republican party rapidly displaced the Whig party, as the opponent in the North of the Democratic party. Accepting organization as a necessity for any success in politics, this movement enlisted the support of masses of pioneer Americans, who found common cause in their hatred of slavery.

This organization came to power in 1861. The outbreak of the rebellion and the secession of eleven states played havoc with all existing party lines. There arose an administration party and an opposition, varying in size and in personnel. In the summer of 1864 the administration faced the necessity of going to the people, and did so with slight hope of a vote of indorsement. It confessed its weakness, for in calls for its convention and in the convention it termed itself the Union party. As the party of the Union it defeated the Democracy, which had in the Chicago convention declared the war a failure. The editor of *Harper's Weekly* could say in 1865 that we were at the end of parties as we had known them.

But the event proved him a poor prophet. For within a

---

[4] Essay on "Politics" (1844).

year of the close of hostilities the Republican party had re-appeared and was functioning as an organization bent upon retaining the control of the government and taking a form that was to prove the most powerful in the history of parties in America. As for the Democracy, it appeared in the fall of 1866 as the one agency for the use of all opponents of the party in power. For the ensuing thirty years these organizations fought for the control of the national government, the Republican group usually winning. The fight for an improvement in the civil service, for the possibility of a genuine tariff revision, for a democratic land policy, for a protection of the Indian, was fought over and over again, but within the parties and against the party organizations. On the floor of Democrátic conventions sympathy was frequently expressed for the laboring man, but when the party obtained control of the Congress as it did twice in this period its record was not productive of important results, or of confidence. Within the Republican party insistent insurgents and fault-finding groups protested in vain at the rigidity of party control. Man after man left the party, two great groups of them in 1872 and in 1912. But there were plenty of leaders and millions of voters who remained.

In the years that followed the period of Reconstruction, the new Republican party organization was amply revealed as of selfish design and cowardly practice, ruled by a small and for the most part self-perpetuating group of politicians, to whom party regularity was a fetish, and whose list of nominees for the Presidency included Generals Grant, Hayes, Garfield, and Harrison, and Major McKinley.[5] To the support of these tickets rallied the voters from the villages and country districts of the old East and of the new West, men for the most

[5] Point of view of members of this group best revealed in *Burrows of Michigan and the Republican Party*, by W. D. Orcutt, and *Notes of a Busy Life*, by J. B. Foraker.

part of small means, who had the traditions, if not the vigor, of their pioneering forbears. These men formed the body of the party, and followed as a rule the party leaders, whose lack of insight or lack of vigor caused them to lay the foundation of many of the ugly problems that have since plagued the nation. Their chosen leaders at the close of the period were Thomas B. Reed, who could as late as 1889 publicly ridicule the possibility of a trust, and William McKinley, who was sponsored by Mark Hanna as the " advance agent of Prosperity."

But in the triumph of Cleveland, the candidate on the Democratic ticket, in 1884 and 1888 and again in 1892, the inquiring voter had opportunity to observe the weakness of the other vessel. Brought to power in 1885 upon a wave of reform, and apparently led by a man whose personal career and rise to power was a proof of the basic assertion of the Democratic faith, yet the party organization stood revealed in office as a group dominated by tradition, routine and dry rot, and upon critical points unable to pursue a consistent policy. Unquestionably the mass of the voters of this ticket were as convinced democrats as any that have existed in America, but the organization was not responsive to the leader in whom they had put their faith. And Cleveland, however much he said of public trust and of faith in the people, was not a democrat as was Jackson. He conceived of government as a great machine which he was called upon to operate, and the way to do so was to obey the rules. The additional precaution in avoidance of trouble was to be sure of good oil and to make way with poor operatives. He was quite as much a believer in efficiency as Hamilton had been. Grover Cleveland, whatever his merits and whatever his deserts, cannot be said to have captained a democratic fight nor to have brought appreciatively nearer the rule of the people.

There finally rose to first leadership in 1896 an apostle of

pioneer democracy, one of whom it has been said, "Blessed are those who mean well, for they shall be spared the labor of thought." William Jennings Bryan believed and preached the doctrines of Andrew Jackson. The issue of bimetallism in 1896 covered the deeper sources of discontent and the *Nation* was right in saying that the greater proportion of all the discontented would naturally flock to the Bryan standard. Most of the radicals did, including Eugene Debs and H. D. Lloyd, but many with misgivings, not being blind to the existence of the Democratic machines in Illinois, Pennsylvania, New York and elsewhere. John Hay pictured Bryan as attacking everyone who wore a clean shirt, but William Vaughn Moody, then living in Chicago, with keener analysis, thought of the need of men going out to help Bryan in the next crusade. Whatever the disposition of the bulk of the voters, there was a clear alignment in leadership in 1896. Opposed to Bryan was his real antagonist, Mark Hanna—than whom there has not been in American party history a better example of the business man in politics for the protection of business. The Republican appeal was frankly to business men and to energetic leaders, and has remained so to this day, never revealing its policy more definitely than during the Presidential campaign of 1920. But within the ranks of the Republican party a battle for democracy that waxed hot in the second adminstration of Roosevelt has been fought in the ensuing years—a battle that led to an absolute division of party membership in the Senate during the Taft administration and caused the split in the party as a whole in the late summer of 1912. It was the outbreak of this quarrel within the Republican party and its continuance that made possible the election of Woodrow Wilson in 1912.

In the building of America and in the building of its parties there were two impelling purposes; the purpose to govern and

the purpose to participate. Two parties arose to meet these desires. Gradually faced as they were with the necessities of the American form of government, and of the control of party units spread over a continental area, each party developed an organization that came in time to dominate the party and govern its action.

Gradually only has come the realization that the peculiar conditions out of which these impelling purposes arose no longer persist in the United States. Since 1900, in place of a nation in the process of building its structure and of peopling its domain, we have had a nation testing its structure and improving its safeguards as it attempted to adapt itself to the highly complex economic conditions of modern society. The third purpose of party has been left dominant in both great organizations, but the old appeals have been used and very successfully.

There has been need for a national party whose founders conceived of its primary function as that of insuring the protection of the citizen in the liberties promised him under the American form of government, and of improving and safeguarding the conditions under which the average man and woman must live and work. Appreciation of that need has been at the root of the series of unsuccessful political protests that have played so important a part in the past fifty years, and it had thus far the fullest and clearest expression in the activities and demands of a group of Insurgent Republicans who did much in the decade that preceded the Great War to arouse a wider understanding.[6] Gradually, as the immediacy of the problems of the war has been minimized in the public mind, the demand for a party and for leaders that will formulate an adequate domestic platform has resumed an important place in contemporary discussion.

[6] One outstanding commentator has concluded that "Insurgency is the only highway to practical public service."

There has been, and still is, little realization that as long as the underlying appeal of the old parties is widely accepted, there is no hope whatever that a third party will be successful or enduring. Schisms within the parties, and particularly class movements, will continue to play into the hands of the upholders of party tradition in the United States. Fundamentally weak are all pronouncements of program upon economic issues, particularly when of primary interest to a single section or industrial interest. A widespread demand for a new conception of party must first develop. Until the average man sees in a new party a new *function* for party it is certain that every movement, however sound its proposals, will remain weaker than the old organizations.

The most important question, then, is, how large an element of the American people is conscious, or may at an early date become conscious, of the need for a new party, not because of a recurring disgust with actions of the party organizations or a passing enthusiasm for some outstanding leader, but because of the condition of their daily life and of their expectations and demands in the way of government? In answer one cannot with confidence point to the great Progressive vote of 1912. The greater part of that vote was opportunist and not convinced. But one may feel safe in asserting that there is a possible controlling element in every state where there has been within the past twenty years a genuine progressive success in state elections; that in every large city and industrial center there is a vigorous minority that may be detached from class movements, and that in university communities, and among those influenced by them, there will be much ferment and support. All these elements believe that neither good government nor good men in government are a sufficient answer to the present need.

What does this conception of party imply? First of all an organization of a comparatively few men who are supported

by a great number of enrolled citizens to whom they are responsible and by whom they may be removed. The need calls for actual enrollment, payment of dues, and continuous support. Moreover, the territorial organization of parties must be accepted. There must be acceptance of the fact that neither measures nor leaders, but party is the power that accomplishes results in the government, and that publicity is an essential quality. Such a conception precludes the possibility of men combining for temporary causes, or of accomplishing more than minor successes, unless their programs have a national appeal. Such a conception will lead to the appearance of a considerable number of parties.

It is probable that those who believe that it is the primary function of party to lead in the formulation of public opinion will at some time favor an independent candidate for the Presidency. They recognize that the directive political power lodged in that office is the greatest strength of the existing party tradition. Capture the Presidency and political parties will re-form in Congress on the basis of a new alignment, a genuine alignment upon the issues that divide the electorate at the time. There may be great question as to the time that such course should be adopted with any hope of success, but there can be no serious doubt that the development is inevitable.

## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

General bibliographies: A. P. C. Griffin, *List of Works Relating to Political Parties in the United States* (1907); Alta Claflin, *Political Parties in the United States, 1800–1914, A list of references* (1915).

Of general use for the greater part of the period covered: Edward Stanwood, *History of the Presidency*, I (1912), II (1916).

General treatises on political parties in the United States: A. L. Lowell, *Public Opinion and Popular Government* (1913); W. M. Sloane, *Party Government in the United States* (1914); H. J. Ford, *The Rise and Growth of American Politics* (1898); R. C. Brooks,

*Political Parties and Electoral Problems* (1923); Jesse Macy, *Party Organization and Machinery* (1904); P. O. Ray, *Political Parties and Practical Politics* (1913); M. Ostrogorski, *Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties* (1902); J. A. Woodburn, *Political Parties and Party Problems* (1914); C. E. Merriam, *The American Party System* (1922); A. D. Morse, *Parties and Party Leaders* (1923); Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion* (1922); James Bryce, *The American Commonwealth* (1894).

Shorter studies of primary significance:[7] A. L. Lowell, "Influence of Party Upon Legislation," in *American Historical Association Report* (1901), I, 319; W. G. Sumner, "Politics in America, 1776–1876," in *North American Review*, January, (1876), 47–87; A. L. Lowell, "Oscillations in Politics," *Annals of American Academy*, XII, 69; A. D. Morse, "Natural History of Party," *Yale Review*, II, 74; Allen Johnson, "Nationalizing Influence of Party," *Yale Review*, XV, 283–292; J. W. Gannaway, "Real Party Forces," in *Iowa Journal of History and Politics*, III, 511–528; J. N. Larned, "Criticism of Two Party Politics," *Atlantic Monthly*, CVII, 289–300; A. C. McLaughlin, "Significance of Political Parties," *Atlantic Monthly*, CI, 145–156; Herbert Tuttle, "The Despotism of Party," *Atlantic Monthly*, LIV, 374–384; A. D. Morse, "The Place of Party in the Political System," *Annals of the American Academy*, II, 300–308; A. D. Morse, "What is Party?" *Political Science Quarterly*, XI, 68–81; A. D. Morse, "The Democratic Party," *Political Science Quarterly*, VI, 593–613; A. D. Morse, "The Republican Party," *Political Science Quarterly*, VII, 522–535; Charles Richardson, "Party Government," *Academy of Social and Political Science*, II, 518–521, 653–665; Walter Lippmann, "Background of Parties," in *American-Scandinavian Review* (March, 1921); A. B. Hart, "Exercise of the Suffrage," *Political Science Quarterly*, VII, 307–329; A. C. Millspaugh, "Irregular Voting in the United States," *Political Science Quarterly*, XXXIII, 230; F. J. Turner, "Sections and Nation," *Yale Review*, XII, 1–21 (October, 1922).

The general point of view taken in this sketch of party develop-

[7] The papers by A. D. Morse have been recently reprinted in one volume, *Parties and Party Leaders* (1923).

ment may be found also in the following papers and reviews: "Recent Manifestation of Sectionalism," *American Journal of Sociology*, XIX, 446–467; "Distribution of the Presidential Vote of 1912," *American Journal of Sociology*, XX, 18–30; "Decline of the Democratic Party," *American Journal of Sociology*, XX, 313–334; "Minority Rule," *Sewanee Review*, October, 1914; "A Future for the Democratic Party," *New Republic*, February 13, 1915; "An Elder Statesman," *The New Republic*, June 6, 1915; "A Future for the Republican Party," *New Republic*, May 23, 1915; "The President or His Party," *New Republic*, May 13, 1916; "Autobiography of a Stand Pat Republican," *The Dial*, May 25, 1916; "Rôle of the Middle West," *New Republic*, August 12, 1916; "William the Good," *New Republic*, August 19, 1916; "An Intimate Biography," *Sewanee Review*, April, 1917, "Real and Unreal Third Parties," *New York Evening Post*, July 20, 1920; "Lessons of the 1916 Vote," *New York Times*, October 31, 1920; "Realities in Politics," *New Republic*, November 3, 1920; "Woodrow Wilson and the Democratic Party," *The Pacific Review*, March, 1921; "The Cleveland Era," *New Republic*, March 10, 1920; "Gossip with a Purpose," *New Republic*, December 13, 1921; "The Story of a Crusade," *New York Evening Post*, December 15, 1921; "The Game of Politics," *American Review*, November, 1923.

# INDEX

Abbott, W. C., quoted on party, 10
Abolitionist party, 135
Abolitionists, 118, 127
Adams, C. F., quoted in the campaign of 1900, 273
Adams, Henry, quoted on McKinley, 261; on modern politics, 258; on the period 1870–95, 237
Adams, John, 31; Hamilton and, 72; Jefferson and in 1800, 71, 72; party organization and, 66
Adams, J. Q., 89, 92, 103; anti-slavery issue, 127; chosen president, 95
Adams, Samuel, 33, 36, 46–47
Administration, lack of unity, 62, 63
"Advance agent of prosperity," 261
Agreements 39
Agriculture, 17
Albany Regency, 114
Aldrich, N. W., 264; tariff revision and, 309, 310, 312
Alger, R. A., 215
Aliens, 67
Allen, W. V., 247, 253, 262
Altgeld, J. P., 239
American democracy, 13, 99, 109 (bibliography)
American party, 148, 156
Americanism, 17
Americans, 14
Anarchist parties, 216–217
Anarchists, 276
Annapolis convention, 44
Anti-Federal, 52
Anti-Imperialistic league, 268
Anti-Masonic movement, 107, 114, 147
Anti-slavery sentiment, 126, 127
Appalachians, 27, 28, 99
Armed-ship controversy, 335
Arthur, C. A., 191, 197, 201, 205; administration, 201, 202

Articles of confederation, 43; opposition to ratification, 46; revision, 58

Babcock, K. C., quoted on the first Republican party, 88–89
Ballinger-Pinchot controversy, 312
Baltimore, convention of, 1840, 117; convention of 1848, 131; Democratic convention of 1852, 142; Republican convention of 1864, 162
Banks, N. P., 148
Barker, Wharton, 273
Bayard, T. F., 197
Beard, C. A., quoted on the Constitution, 47, 48; on Jeffersonian Democracy, 82
Becker, Carl, quoted on party of the Revolution, 36
Bell, John, 156, 158
Bennett, M. E., viii
Benton, T. H., 123, 128, 130
Big business, 281
Bi-metallic League, 246
Bi-metallism, 226, 239, 363
Birney, J. G., 118, 126
Blaine, J. G., 178, 185, 190, 196, 200, 201; disaffection with his nomination, 207; nomination, 204
Blair, Francis, 177
Bland, R. P., 246
"Blocks of five," 216
Bloody Shirt issue, 199, 218
Boonesborough, 39
Borah, W. E., 347
Boston caucus, 29
Boston committee of correspondence, 34
Boston Junto, 29
Breckenridge, J. C., 156, 158
Breckenridge Democratics, 158
Brice, C. S., 234
Bristow, B. H., 185

369